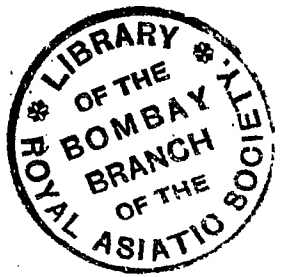
GOD
968.0484
Nor/Sou
106605

00106605

00106605

Digitized with financial assistance from
Shri Brihad Bhartiya Samaj
on 31 October, 2019



THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR

THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR

1899–1900

A MILITARY RETROSPECT UP TO THE RELIEF OF LADYSMITH

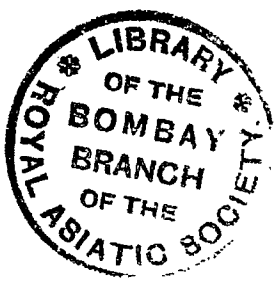
BY MAJOR S. L. NORRIS

OF THE ROYAL ENGINEERS

106605

GOD
068.0484.
Nor/Sou
106605 Ex-e-46

WITH MAPS



LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET

1900

Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable, Printers to Her Majesty

To the Memory of

ANDREW GILBERT WAUCHOPE

WHO, WHETHER IN THIRTY YEARS WITH THE COLOURS,
OR IN TEN DEVOTED PARTLY TO PUBLIC AFFAIRS,
AS A GENTLEMAN, A SOLDIER, AND A PATRIOT,
HAS FOR EVER DESERVED WELL OF
HIS COUNTRYMEN.

PREFACE

In submitting these pages to readers already, in many cases, as well informed as myself, I should explain that I did not at first intend to do so; rather, in collecting material for a monthly article on the War for my brother officers, I began to wish for an impartial account from a military point of view.

Thanks to the kind assistance of the R.E. Institute with the maps and plans, I am now enabled to hope that what has afforded pleasure to me may become of some use to others.

As some may think the criticisms in these pages are personal, and hardly become my comparative inexperience, I would say that, in accepting a command, one's own friends and teachers become public characters, and, rightly, the subjects of public criticism; also I venture to think that they would prefer criticism to come from the pen of a brother officer, earnestly seeking the truth, rather than from that of a literary or journalistic genius. I hope and believe that, except in the case of dead men, I

cannot be accused of partiality, favour, or affection. Lastly, in what is after all mainly a compilation, I would acknowledge my great indebtedness to the brilliant correspondents of our Press, and to those of some foreign newspapers, whose information has been often independent and of the greatest value, while their criticism could rarely be accused of favouring anything English; also to Captain Painvin of the French Staff for his *Guerre au Transvaal*, and to Colonel Lonsdale Hale, who first taught me what military history ought not to be, and from whose lectures most of our strategists and tacticians have learned so much; to those officers and men who have so kindly told me what they personally knew, or have lent me what they had taken pains to write; and last, but not least, to my friend Mr. W. B. Blaikie, to whose criticisms and interest every page of this book is deeply indebted.

ATHENÆUM CLUB,
November 10, 1900.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

CAUSES THAT BROUGHT ON THE WAR

PAGE

The Boers, the Grand Trek, the Boers and slavery, Livingstone and the Boers, the two Republics, immigration of miners, Sir Garnet Wolseley, outbreak of hostilities, 1880-81, Majuba, the Convention of 1881, the Convention of 1884, the Franchise Laws, Dutch supremacy, the Afrikander Bond, Uitlanders and Capitalists, closing the drifts, the National Union, Dr. Jameson and the Raid, the Reform Leaders, declaration of war, ... 1-43

CHAPTER II

THE BOER TACTICS AND THEIR FORCES

The Boer objective, their mobility, adaptation of tactics, their military service, their artillery, . . . 44-54

CHAPTER III

THE BRITISH ARMY IN SOUTH AFRICA

In September 1899, its inadequacy; the First Army Corps; the British Empire, after Colenso; the transport, the War Office, ... 55-70

CHAPTER IV

THE DEFENCE OF NATAL

Disposition of troops; the Boer invasions, in Cape Colony, in Natal; Talana Hill, Elandslaagte, retreat on Ladysmith, Nicholson's Nek, Farquhar's Farm, . . 71-98

CHAPTER V

LORD METHUEN'S COLUMN

PAGE

Sir Redvers Buller, Belmont, Graspan, Battle of Modder River, ... 99-123

CHAPTER VI

BATTLE OF MAJESFONTEIN

Boer preparations, Sunday's bombardment, the Highland Brigade, death of Wauchope, the Gordon Highlanders, final retirement, British losses, ... 124-145

CHAPTER VII

STORMBERG AND COLENSO

General Gatacre, engagement at Stormberg, retirement of column; Ladysmith invested, Boer strategy, Willow Grange, Battle of Colenso, Boer position, plan of attack, loss of the guns, general retirement; close of 1899, the British Force, the general situation, British enthusiasm, ... 146-173

CHAPTER VIII

OPENING OF 1900, FIGHTING ROUND SPION KOP

Field Force in Natal, rival moves, move on Springfield, on Tritchardt's Drift, Potgieter's Drift, Acton Homes, Venter's Spruit; capture of Spion Kop, December 24, 1899; evacuation of Spion Kop, works on summit, description of the fighting, some criticism, . . 174-208

CHAPTER IX

THE RELIEF OF LADYSMITH

A new plan, Vaal Krantz, another retirement, Hlangwane Hill, Pieter's Hill, Ladysmith relieved, 209-226

CHAPTER X

THE SIEGE OF LADYSMITH

PAGE

Food supply and garrison, successful sorties, great attack on Wagon Hill, the British losses, ... 227-240

APPENDIX A

The Conventions of Pretoria and London, ... 241-263

APPENDIX B

The National Union's Manifesto, ... 263-277

APPENDIX C

The Majesfontein despatches and a letter, ... 277-287

APPENDIX D

The Stormberg despatches, ... 287-293

APPENDIX E

The Spion Kop despatches, ... 294-307

APPENDIX F

Cablegrams about the above despatches, . . 307-309

LIST OF MAPS

General Yule's Retreat from Dundee, . . . *at page* 78

Route Map, Orange Free State, . . . „ 103

Battle of Modder River, ... „ 110

The Engagement at Stormberg, . . . „ 148

Sketch of Spion Kop Position, . . . „ 183

Sketch of Vaal Krantz, ... „ 211

Environs of Ladysmith, ... „ 230

CHAPTER I

Ill fares a people passion wrought,
A land of many days that cleaves
In two great halves, when each one leaves
The middle road of sober thought.

Tennyson.

THE Cape was first discovered in 1486 by the Portuguese under Bartholomew Diaz; but except as a harbour where ships could obtain victuals from the natives and fresh water from the springs under Table Mountain, it was never settled in or colonised by any of the three great maritime powers for over a century and a half.

The English had first landed in 1620, on the way to India, when Admirals Shillinge and Fitzherbert took formal possession of it for James I., but they had never obtained any hold on the country; and in 1652 the Dutch had definitely seized on Cape Town for their East Indian Company, which obtained a charter from the United Netherlands. In 1675 a few German colonists had first established themselves in Drakenstein; but on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1687, the Dutch States-General sent out three hundred Huguenot French to settle at Drakenstein. These took the land by compulsory purchase, and, we

may also say, 'the labours of the people in possession.' Thus at the end of the eighteenth century we find 25,000 Europeans in Cape Colony, all Boers and Colonists; they had all adopted the Dutch Reformed Church, and they remain to this day the most pronouncedly religious people in the world, although self-interest and indulgence has, in some cases, undermined their moral constitution and left only a veneer of dogmatic and exclusive Pharisaism, highly flavoured with an abundance of scriptural quotation. Education was unnecessary and often neglected in those days, and, even now, when the season requires all hands in the fields, all book work is abandoned, for the time, by the boys and girls as a matter of course.

Both morning and evening the Bible was read aloud by the head of the family, and consequently, even when unable to write his name, the poorest Boer was familiar with the Holy Writ.

The new-comers increased in number in truly African fashion, and were, even in the eighteenth century, continually trekking northward in search of unclaimed lands which they rapidly called their own. As early as 1801 some were already settled in Bechuanaland.

In 1795, when the French invaded the United Provinces, the Boers of Cape Colony invited the English to assume the government, preferring their rule to that of the First consul. But they were soon discontented with their new rulers, and we find them in open revolt in 1799 at Graaf Reinet, north of Grahamstown. The revolt was suppressed, but under the Treaty of Amiens (1802) the government reverted

to the States-General under French protection until it was finally seized by the English in 1805. This conquest from the French was confirmed by the Treaty of Vienna, when the sum of six millions was paid for the Cape Colony and British Guiana; and the former has from that time always been an English possession. It is curious that the present (or late) member for Graaf Reinet in the Cape Parliament is one of those who conscientiously—and there are few better men living—gave up his seat and his property to fight with the Boers in this their last effort to assert their supremacy in South Africa.

Almost from the beginning of the nineteenth century, although the English were firmly established in possession by the Treaty of Vienna in 1815, the Cape was looked upon by them merely as a stopping-place on the highroad to India, and was peopled, with the exception of the native races and a French colony at Drakenstein, south of Cape Town, almost entirely by the original Dutch settlers of the previous century. The officials, it is true, were English, but until 1820, when four thousand English settlers were sent out to found Port Elizabeth, there were practically no English colonists, properly so called.

The Dutch, or Boer, element farmed all the lands, and retained the properties they had acquired before their Government had ceded the country to the English. They were mainly a pastoral people, and were looked upon with contempt by the early writers of the history of Cape Colony. They were able to obtain abundant cheap labour from the natives, Kaffirs, or Hottentots as they were first called, and also

possessed, in 1795, some five thousand imported Negro slaves, who came down the east coast from the north. Existence was easy, labour abundant, and, where paid for at all, the wages were either nominal or rendered in kind; consequently the Boer, whether Dutch, French, or German, or more probably a mixture of all three, was content to smoke his pipe on the *stoep*, or raised verandah, of his picturesque old house, and, considering the native races as only existing for his own ease and profit, was yet very far from being a cruel or unkind master.

The unrest of the Boers and their continual tendency to trek northward was aggravated under British government by two fresh factors. Owing to the infusion of French or Celtic blood in many of their best families, such as Villiers, du Preez (du Pré), Viljoen (Valjean), and others, a number of the Boers had talent for civil and political employment, and were restless if they could not get it. Also the governing principle since 1830 in English rule has been the equality under heaven of all races, black, white, or yellow. This principle was unintelligible to the Boer, and when in 1834 he found himself suddenly deprived of his slaves, and the black races asserting their individuality and self-respect, he felt he must move away where land was more easily acquired, and where the natives would not be averse to a kind of serfdom that differed but little from the condition of the slaves he hoped again to collect round his household.

The Boers are characteristically patriarchal, and it was to maintain the independence of their separate

families that they combined under a common Republican Government. They are also conservative, and greatly resented the prohibition of the official use of the Dutch language in 1825 by the British. It was again permitted with the establishment of the Cape Parliament, and, in the Cape Colony, since 1882 both languages enjoy equal rights.

The Grand Trek, as it is called, from which both the Dutch Republics and the Colony of Natal trace their history, followed the abolition of slavery by the British. In June 1837 over a thousand wagons were on the road north. The great majority crossed the Orange River and established themselves in Kaffraria, or the Orange Free State, as it has since been called. Some, crossing the Drakensberg, founded Pietermaritzburg, which was called after Pieter Retief and Gevrit Maritz, their two leaders; and from this time the Colony of Natal has increased and prospered. Originally started in 1823 by Lieutenants King and Farwell, R.N., on the coast, it had not, up to this time, been able to organise or extend itself inland.

But in Kaffraria the Grand Trek was the signal for a bloody rising, extending into Cape Colony. History demonstrates that no effort by white races can exterminate the native races in Africa, and although the British put down this rising, the natives rose again in 1845, and until 1850, when Kaffraria was formally annexed, the conflict between the black and white races, with all its savage horrors, devastated the country.

The Cape Government, however, from the first refused to admit the independence of Natal, and in

1840 the country was forcibly brought under the British rule. Eight years later we find numbers of the Natal Boers again trekking across the Drakensberg into the country between the Vaal and the Orange River. But here also the Cape Government refused to allow their emigrant subjects to set up an independent power on their borders, and to be a constant source of danger, from their absolute disregard of the rights and property of the native races, whether Kaffir, Basuto, or Griqua. The last named resisted the Boers by force, and appealed to the British, who intervened, and set up in 1848 a local government, known as the 'Orange Sovereignty,' annexing all territory north of the Orange River three years later. In 1837 the most northern settlers after the 'Grand Trek' had crossed the Vaal, and soon after 1848 a large number of others began to look upon the great tract of country towards the Limpopo as offering a chance of escape from Great Britain, its taxation, its language, and, above all, its control in their relations with the native races.

Moreover, the troubles with the natives were by no means over in the newly formed Orange Sovereignty, as the Basutos rose all along the eastern border, and the expenses of their control far exceeded any material advantage derived from the 'Sovereignty' by Cape Colony. In 1852 Andreas Pretorius headed the great trek across the Vaal, shook off the dust of British soil, and, in a new land, declared the establishment of the Republic of the Transvaal, of which he became the first President. His name has since been given to its capital town. But this aggression against the

natives was not unresisted; the Boers found themselves living by the sword and keeping their farms by their rifles. The only previous immigrants had been the missionaries, seeking to establish better relations between the black and white races, to the great advantage of the former, and in some cases themselves married to their black converts.

In 1852, by the Sand River Convention with Pretorius, Great Britain renounced all rights in the Transvaal, while the Boers, by a special article, bound themselves not to practise slavery.

But the Boers, though for themselves they treasured their Bible and their Reformed Church, could not admit that a black needed religion, and, in addition, looked upon the British missionaries, who claimed the protection of their own Government, as emissaries of the latter in a political sense. They consequently opposed them, and still further embittered their relations with the Cape Colony, from whom they were now so far removed as to be independent.

In his sojourn in Africa in 1845, David Livingstone was brought much in contact with the Boers, especially in their relations with the natives. Before returning home in 1852, he wrote a paper[1] on 'The South African Boers and Slavery.' He felt profoundly, says the late Dr. Blaikie, that all the sins that had been committed by the Colonists and others, against the natives, and all the troubles that had arisen in consequence, sprang from their not recognising the humanity, the brotherhood, of these races, and from

[1] Published with second edition of Blaikie's *Personal Life of Livingstone.*

their treatment of them as if they were but cattle. The sin was grievously aggravated by the conduct of the Dutch Church in South Africa, which had, most unfortunately, fallen under the temptation of vindicating a position, very convenient, no doubt, to the Colonists, but in Livingstone's view most unchristian and unjust. 'She is indirectly,' wrote Livingstone, 'the mainstay of freebooting and slavery —for the suppression of which England sacrifices annually £600,000, and many of her bravest sons. It is a misfortune that the abolition of slavery in the colony was not the work of the Africanders themselves. The feeling that it was done in spite of them prevents them from appreciating the fact that a state of freedom is the best for both white and black. . . . The Boers, having done and suffered much for their religion, naturally felt that, in comparison with the Hottentots, who knew but little of the Great Spirit, they were the peculiar favourites of heaven. . . . They concluded, for instance, that the heathen were given *to them* for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. . . . It is not land they seek to appropriate so much as cattle and slaves. . . . They stereotype the terms *men* and *Christians* (menschen and Krijstilijk) in their language as meaning themselves, and all the coloured classes as *creatures*, *folk*, or *black property* (schepselen, volken, swaarte zoede).' Later, in the same paper, he adds, 'They owe their independence to the ferocious and feeble policy of the Governor of the Cape (Sir Harry Smith). The private practice of slavery by the Transvaal Boers was as well known to the Cape Government

as is the practice of the slave-trade by the Brazilians to the Home Government.' Again, quoting from an uncontradicted newspaper report, he wrote: 'A number of Church members proceeding to the funeral of a friend, in the vicinity of Cradock, observed the footprints of eight Bechuanas, who had travelled about a thousand miles in search of employment a few years before, and were now returning to their own country with the fruits of their honest industry. After the funeral, these Christians armed themselves, and, in the belief that the Bechuanas were Caffres, followed on their footmarks, and, coming upon them sitting behind some bushes, shot down seven, though unresisting and unchallenged. Now, as far as we can learn, up to the time we write, no notice whatever has been taken of this bloody affair. These Boers all pass to the Table of the Lord uncensured. They eat and wipe their mouths, and say, "We have done no wickedness."'

The Synods held in Cape Town opened their arms to these Boers beyond the Vaal who were at that very time plundering mission-stations and expelling missionaries, going to war with the Bakwain tribe, from whom alone they carried off sixty-eight boys and fifty-four girls, many of them well known in the mission schools, and brought them up as slaves. One of these happened to be Sechele's own child, and was restored to his parents when the Boers, retaining the one hundred and twenty-three others, sued for peace!

While the above quotation is entitled to all the weight of Livingstone's honoured name, it must be remembered that all South African missionaries were

not like him, and that some did much to incur the hostility of the Boers to their brethren, which Livingstone so bitterly resents. Whatever truth there was in it as a description of the Transvaal Boers in 1850, we may hope that even this most conservative, if not retrograde, race has not, of late years at any rate, laid themselves open to such charges.

In 1854 the British Government, tired of the continual expense and trouble in the 'Sovereignty,' gave the Boers there their independence as the Orange Free State. Its government soon assimilated itself to that of the Transvaal, under a President controlled by a Raad, or Parliament, and defended against the blacks by raising temporary and local forces, known as commandoes, under field cornets.

In lands where at first no one held his farm by better right than could be seen down the barrel of his weapon, every man and boy over fourteen carried his rifle, both for defence and also for food, as the Boer is willing enough to hunt for his meat, though he expects the blacks to grow his cereals for him. In the constant and bloody struggles that marked the first generation in both Republics, a race of farmers, who were also soldiers, accustomed to act both offensively and defensively, either individually or in combination according to the necessity of the moment, and, above all, accustomed to despise their enemies from their invariable success against badly armed and inferior races, became established from the Limpopo as far south as the Orange River, and from the Drakensberg range as far west as they needed.

The two Republics, of common origin, were from the

first allied, and yet from the first essentially different. The Northern had conquered its own territory, and had by emigration established its own independence, and naturally looked upon the British as supplanters of the Dutch in the south, and on all the Dutch settlers who remained their subjects as political slaves. The Southern had been given their independence and their territory by the British Government, and though as firmly wedded to the former as to the latter, yet they became more and more akin to the Northern Cape Colonists as they saw the rights of every British citizen spreading through the Colony. Their whole trade, both export and import, passed through British territory, and was carried in British vessels; in short, their moral and material advantage was intimately connected with that of the Cape Colony. In the latter, however, the Dutch party, given equal rights, but exceeding the English in number, and allying themselves in 1882 with a newly formed Bond, or organisation of 'Africanders' (*i.e.* Colonists of all white races born in South Africa), still in parts of the great Colony wished for independence, and coveted the freedom of the Transvaalers in their relations with the native races. The leader of the Africander Bond in Cape Colony, Mr. Hofmeyr, Dutch himself, has clearly seen that all white races must join together to exist among the blacks, and, wishing to establish virtual independence, whether under British supremacy or not, set up the much abused watchword, 'Africa for the Africanders.'

With the rise of this party in Cape Colony we note a distinct cleavage in the Orange Free State. One party,

recognising that they owed all to the English, and that the Northern Republic treated them with contempt while seeking to bind them politically to themselves, desired to cultivate good relations with the British Government, and through it to strengthen their commercial interests without any fear for their independence. Mr. Fraser became the acknowledged leader of this party, but was not successful in his struggle for the Presidency of the Republic, which fell to Mr. Steyn, the leader of the other party, which was more distinctly Dutch, and which hoped, even in Cape Colony, as the Dutch still formed the majority of the Colonists and the large majority of the Africanders, that 'Africa for the Africanders' would come to mean 'South Africa for the Dutch,' and the formation of a federation of Dutch republics. This party, which had a very narrow majority in the Free State, opposed all political relations with the British Government, and as certainly became the tool of their stronger brethren across the Vaal, being soon bound by an offensive and defensive alliance between the two Republics.

This is, however, anticipating. In the early seventies a new factor appeared in the south of the Transvaal and on the west of the Free State. New-comers, unable to get land in quantity for pasturage, discovered that under the veldt there were minerals of every sort to be had almost with a pick and shovel. The report of this soon reached Europe, and miners and others, scenting a new Kumara or even California, came out and settled in considerable and rapidly increasing numbers. Companies were formed and claims

pegged out; at first land was cheaply acquired, and in a few years the world became aware that a goldfield, beyond all question, for its size, the richest in the world, was opened to all who had the necessary capital and energy to work it.

From the first these miners, though including other nationalities, were mostly British subjects, and from the fact they sought to acquire their lands by purchase, if possible, from the original native owners; if not, then from the Boer farmer.

They claimed the protection and support of their mother-country, and early in 1876 we find the Native Commissioner, Sir Theophilus Shepstone, much occupied on their behalf, and on that of the natives, who under a British protectorate were maltreated by the Transvaal authorities, and still more by their very independent citizens. Eventually, under instructions from his government, accompanied only by a small force of thirty troopers, he rode to Pretoria and informed President Burgers that he was authorised, if necessary, to proclaim the annexation of the Transvaal to the British Empire. Nor was he without support from the burghers, many of whom were weary of the corruption which already took the place of government, and of the oligarchy who had practically supplanted the Republic by controlling the First or Upper Raad, in which all real power was vested under the constitution of Pretorius. The more enlightened and enterprising Dutchmen saw the energies and capabilities of their countrymen cramped and discouraged in order to secure in a few hands the sale of monopolies in trade and manufacture, and of conces-

sions in railways, water-works, and land for mining purposes.

Early in January 1877, the British Commissioner took up his residence at Pretoria, not announcing what he would do, but receiving deputations and acquiring information as to the state of the country and the best means of extricating it from its difficulties. He found it quite insolvent, the interest on the Government debt had not been paid since July 1876, taxes could not be raised, and the bare expenses of maintenance could not be met. Meantime the native chiefs, finding that even Secocoeni and his less warlike Basutos were able to defy the Boers, united themselves under the Zulu king, Cetewayo, and, massing their impis on the eastern borders, prepared to overwhelm the Transvaal and 'once and for ever' to drive the Dutch south of the Vaal. The danger was the more imminent, as the natives loved their 'Father Sompseu,' as they called Shepstone, and heard that his life was threatened. On 11th April, at his request, they agreed to disband their impis on the understanding that the British Government took the whole of South Africa under its protection.

Before this, President Burgers, who was in almost daily communication with Shepstone, announced to the Raad on the 3rd March that he saw no other way out of their financial and other difficulties than coming under the British Government. It was the overthrow of all his own hopes and ideals, and though logically he admitted that annexation was inevitable, yet to the last he protested against it. On the 9th April the Commissioner wrote that the country was to be

annexed on the 12th, and submitted the terms of the proclamation to the President, who in turn asked the Commissioner to revise the terms of his protest.

On the 12th the proclamation was read by Mr. Osborn, and was well received in Pretoria and in many parts of the Transvaal, especially in the gold-fields, where the loyalists held thanksgiving services and sang 'God Save the Queen.'

But this party was a small minority of the Boers, and the great love of their independence, for which they and their fathers had travelled so far and sacrificed so much, overwhelmed all other considerations. From 1877 to 1880, under the leadership of Mr. Paul Kruger, supported by Piet Joubert and Cronje, this was fostered and developed by a series of open-air meetings organised to petition for the retention of the Dutch official language, and used to protest against the annexation or usurpation of authority by the British. These culminated in the despatch to London of Mr. Kruger and two other delegates in May 1878; but in the official world they found they had neither *locus standi* nor credentials, and they returned in September without having achieved anything except the determination to raise the Vierkleur as a standard of revolt and independence. Two of them at least, Messrs. Kruger and Jorissen, accepted paid work under the Imperial Government.

During 1878 a great change came over the attitude of Secocoeni, who afterwards stated that he was induced by a noted Boer landowner, Abel Erasmus, to oppose the British; Major Clarke, the Civil Commissioner, had taken up arms against him with some

success, but the native disaffection was stirred up by the emissaries of the Boers, and later in the year it became necessary to send Lord Chelmsford against them. The disaster of Isandlwhana in the beginning of 1879 roused the authorities at home to a sense of the importance of the native movement, and in June of that year Lord Wolseley (then Sir Garnet) was sent out in command. In Matabeleland also Lobengula had robbed traders, and had afterwards murdered in cold blood a Captain Patterson and Mr. Sergeaunt, who had credentials from Sir Bartle Frere, the High Commissioner.

Early in 1879 Sir Theophilus Shepstone went to England to confer with the Government, and Colonel Lanyon acted for him in Pretoria.

Meanwhile the Dutch agitators at the Cape were most successful in spreading a belief in the Transvaal that the English intended to abandon the country as they had done the Orange Sovereignty. This more than anything assisted such men as Paul Kruger, and on the 18th March 1879, a large meeting of three thousand armed Boers was held within thirty miles of Pretoria, and thereafter government was only carried on in the face of armed, if not active, opposition. A corps of loyalists called the Pretoria Horse was formed, originally to protect the borders, but after this meeting they were employed to patrol the country and watch the Boers who were encamped under arms.

Early in April Sir Bartle Frere paid his long-promised visit to the Transvaal, and visited the Boer camp; he reported to the Secretary of State that

those in camp would accept nothing short of the repeal of the annexation; that this demand was caused by the inability of the Executive (1) to fulfil the promises given at the time of the annexation; (2) to prevent the disloyal inhabitants from terrorising over the rest; and (3) to give the mass of the people any sense of the stability, or the real power, of the Government. Meantime the Boer camp was gradually brought nearer to Pretoria, until it arrived within six miles of the town, which was practically in a state of siege. The successful conduct of the Zulu War, however, strongly influenced the Boers, who saw that Sir Garnet Wolseley and a powerful force would soon be at liberty. Accordingly, on the 15th April they broke up their laager and returned home, much to the relief of Sir Bartle Frere, who returned to Cape Town.

In June Sir Garnet notified Colonel Lanyon that the Government was under his—Sir Garnet's—orders, and shortly afterwards he arrived in Pretoria and was sworn in as Governor.

In November an Executive and also a Legislative Council were formed by letters-patent; but while the Government thus promised well, the Boer agitators had now no longer any fear of the natives on the borders, and were much cheered by the dispersal of the force that had subdued them.

They then held another seditious meeting under Pretorius, who was promptly arrested by Sir Garnet; but as the Secretary of State did not support the proceedings against him, he was released and even offered a seat on the Executive Council.

In December Mr. Gladstone's Midlothian speeches

were read all over the Transvaal; they in every way encouraged the disloyal party, and in March 1880, a resolution was passed at a mass meeting, in which he was 'thanked for the great sympathy shown in their fate.' Another supporter of the Boers in the new Radical Ministry was Mr. Courtney, and on the 1st August 1880, Sir Bartle Frere, the greatest statesman who had been at Cape Town since Sir George Grey, was recalled by telegram.

Sir Owen Lanyon had succeeded Sir Garnet Wolseley on May 25th, and Sir George Colley, who had been Military Secretary in India, was Governor of Natal. Government in the Transvaal did not increase in strength, and on the 11th November the Boers successfully resisted an attempt to enforce by distress the payment of taxes by one of their number named Bezuidenhout, near Potchefstroom. A mass meeting, originally called for the 8th December at Paarde Kraal, was immediately hastened, and when held resulted on the 16th December (Dingaan's Day) in the proclamation of the Republic under the triumvirate—Kruger, Joubert, and Pretorius, with Heidelberg as the seat of Government.

This proclamation, with a covering letter in which the Boers gave Sir Owen Lanyon forty-eight hours to yield, but declared they had no wish to spill blood, reached him at 10.30 P.M. on December 17th. Potchefstroom was already being besieged by the Boers. Sir Owen's reply was given to the messenger at noon on Sunday the 19th December, on which day the Boers had ordered an ambush to be laid for a part of the garrison of Lydenburg, which Sir Owen had summoned

to Pretoria. His reply reached Heidelberg on the morning of the 20th; and the same day, between 2 and 3 P.M., the Boers surprised Colonel Anstruther's column at Bronkhorst Spruit, and killed or wounded eight officers and one hundred and twenty men of the 94th Regiment before they surrendered. Captains Elliot and Lambert were afterwards given a safe-conduct to the border by the Commandant-General Piet Joubert; but on arriving at the Vaal were treacherously fired on by their escort, and Captain Lambert only just escaped to tell of his companion's murder.

Sir Owen Lanyon then placed the country under martial law, and the inhabitants of Pretoria, four thousand in number, were laagered under the fort, and remained so for three months. Such energetic measures were taken to protect the town that the triumvirate never attacked it at all.

Nearly all the native chiefs sent messengers to Pretoria assuring the Government of their loyalty and offering to attack the Boers. All were told that they must remain quiet, and did so, taking charge of all Government property in their districts.

The towns of Potchefstroom, Rustenburg, Lydenburg, Marabastad, and Wakkerstroom were held by the loyalists and the detachments of troops in them, and were never taken by the Boers. The latter, however, sent a strong force to seize Laing's Nek, and patrolled Natal as far as Newcastle.

Sir George Colley sent all his available troops towards that place, and on the 10th of January he left Pietermaritzburg and took command of the force,

which was less than a thousand strong, hardly sufficient to check the further advance of the Boers until reinforcements could arrive from home. The Cape Colony, being engaged in the Basuto War, were not only unable to help the loyalists, but had even a few months before obtained a force of three hundred loyal Volunteers from Sir Owen Lanyon, to whom they would now have been invaluable. A waiting policy was necessary in Natal, but did not commend itself to Sir George Colley, a brilliant theoretical tactician, who believed that with the handful of regular troops available he could relieve the Transvaal and stamp out the rebellion. Accordingly, on the 28th January 1881, he left Mount Prospect camp with five hundred men of the 58th Regiment, and seventy mounted men, and attacked some two thousand Boers holding a strong position on Laing's Nek. The result was absolute defeat, with a loss of ninety killed and one hundred and five wounded, but the real result was the knowledge gained by the Boers that by fighting thus they could defeat regular British infantry. The moral effect was enormous, supporters poured in from the Free State, and the force gathered confidence every day.

On February 7th the mail was stopped between Newcastle and Mount Prospect, and the next day Colley left the latter place with five companies of the 60th Rifles, two guns, and thirty-eight mounted men to patrol the road and ensure its safety. Near Ingogo River he was attacked by a larger force of Boers, some one thousand strong, from Laing's Nek, and surrounded on a hill called Schuins Hoogte, about ten

miles from Newcastle. Here he held out till nightfall, when he managed to regain the camp, having lost seventy-six killed and sixty-nine wounded, who were brought into Newcastle the next day.

Reinforcements were now on their way under Major-General Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., and the first reached Newcastle on the 17th February. On the 21st General Wood was again sent south to hasten the reinforcements, and two more regiments were moved up to the camp. Sir George appears to have been anxious to strike a blow in his absence, and after mess on the 26th he ordered out detachments of the 58th, 60th, and 92nd Regiments, and of the Naval Brigade, to the number of five hundred and fifty-four men, and marched them to the top of Majuba Hill, a great truncated mountain seven thousand feet high overlooking the Boer laagers, a little more than a mile away. No attempt was made to strengthen the position thus gained, in spite of the repeated requests of the Staff officers, and the absence of artillery or even rocket apparatus greatly lessened its value. The main body in the camp were left without orders, or even the knowledge of what the General was doing; they were consequently unable to support him in any way.

When in the morning the Boers discovered the British, they commenced to inspan with a view to retreat; but finding they were not fired on by artillery, they sent about two hundred riflemen to storm the hill, covered by the long-range fire of their main force.

They advanced, taking every advantage of cover, and continually picking off their opponents, who were

gradually driven to the furthest part of the summit. Here Sir George Colley was shot in the head, and many fell round him, while the remainder saved themselves as best they could on the steep slopes. As a result, the force was wiped out, ninety-two were killed, one hundred and thirty-four wounded, and numbers taken prisoners. The Boer commandant, Nicholas Smit, planned the attack perfectly, and to this day the Boers rightly regard it as their greatest military achievement. They lost but one killed and five wounded.

Sir Frederick Roberts, with ten thousand men, was already on the way to South Africa when the Ministry at home decided that the war was an unjust one, recalled him, and ordered Sir Evelyn Wood to make an armistice, with a view to abandoning the Transvaal, at any rate, in part. This was agreed to on the 6th March, and on the 21st of the same month peace was declared, the exact terms and frontiers to be settled by a Royal Commission within six months. This consisted of Sir Hercules Robinson, High Commissioner, Sir Henry de Villiers, Chief Justice at the Cape, and Sir Evelyn Wood, with President Brand of the Free State, as Assessor. Sir Henry de Villiers, himself a Dutch Africander, had been proposed by President Brand and also by the Africander Bond in Cape Colony, and took the side of the Boers on every point at issue. Sir Hercules Robinson, as president, was tied down by his instructions, and Sir Evelyn Wood in a minority report recorded his dissent from the majority on several most important points. The Convention of Pretoria was signed on August 3rd, 1881, as coming

into force on the 8th of the same month, and afterwards an assembly of about a hundred native chiefs, who had refrained from attacking the Boers on the representations of the British Government, were forthwith informed that, the Transvaal having been retroceded, they should in future address themselves to its Government!

Mr. Hudson was appointed Resident, and from that time appears to have submitted to every kind of insult directed against the 'suzerain power.'

The Volksraad was to ratify this Convention within three months; but at first refused to do so, obtaining from the Government an admission that the necessity for further concessions might be proved by experience. They then ratified it as follows:—'The Volksraad is not satisfied with this Convention, . . . and, maintaining all objections to the Convention as made before the Royal Commission, or stated in the Raad, and for the purpose of showing to everybody that the love of peace and unity inspires it, for the time and provisionally submitting the articles of the Convention to a practical test, hereby complying with the request of the English Government contained in the telegram of the 13th October 1881, proceeds to ratify the Convention.'

Such was the acceptance of a document of which Sir Evelyn Wood in his dissent stated:—'To contend that the Royal Commission ought not to decide contrary to the wishes of the Boers, because such decision might not be accepted, is to deny to the Commission the very power of decision that it was agreed should be left in its hands.'

The Republic was thus restarted under the triumvirate, and in 1882 returned to its old form of Government under Kruger as President.

The old Law No. 1 of 1876 gave the franchise to any resident of sufficient property in the State, or, failing that, of one year's complete residence.

This was altered in October 1882, when Law No. 7 enacted that 'aliens might be naturalised and enfranchised after five years' residence.'

This new law was designed to keep out what was known as the 'annexation party,' and was the first violation of the *status quo* which under the Convention was to be maintained.

The right of the various townships, each to return a member to the Raad, was then cancelled, and the British Government showed no signs of objecting to these measures under the Convention.

But the clauses referring to the natives, the only loyalists whom Mr. Gladstone's Government had even made a pretence of protecting, were those which exercised the Boers most. They interfered in Bechuanaland, and would have annexed the whole of it and cut the Cape Colony off from the north but for the timely action of Mr. Rhodes and its result, the expedition under Sir Charles Warren.

They then set up Dinizulu, and were only prevented by British action from annexing Zululand as far as the sea. A portion of Zululand, measuring three thousand square miles, was allotted to the Boers, who set up there the New Republic, which was soon after merged in the Transvaal. South of this Kruger was negotiating for a railway to be constructed to St. Lucia

through the Tonga country, but the chiefs of the latter, being alarmed at the large inroad on Zululand, put themselves under British protection, and thus the only possible port which they could have annexed was in 1884 formally made British territory.

In Swaziland the secret service money was used to suborn the various chiefs, and King Umbandine was approached to make over all his powers to Mr. Kruger.

In the Pretoria Convention the assertion of the suzerainty of the Queen, in the preamble and the second article, gave great offence to the Boers, as well as the title of 'Transvaal State' instead of 'South African Republic,' and the right under Article II. to move troops through the Transvaal in time of war, or apprehension of war. In 1884 Lord Derby obtained the Queen's assent to the Convention of London, in which the articles of the first Convention were replaced by new ones, no mention being made of the preamble, which presumably still holds good. The desired title was given to the Republic, and in the new articles the word suzerain does not occur. The native boundaries were readjusted, and the duties and powers of the British Resident much reduced; in particular the stipulation that the High Commissioner or the British Government could only be communicated with through him was not repeated in the new Convention.

The Rand was proclaimed in September 1886, in which year the revenue of the Republic had risen to £196,236, and its expenses to £154,636. Both now increased rapidly, and in 1889 reached £1,577,445 and £1,201,135 respectively.

In the budget for 1899 they amounted to £4,087,852 and £3,951,234; this enormous rise coincided with the growth of the Rand, while nine-tenths of the revenue came directly from it.

A most gigantic and tyrannous monopoly was constructed by Dr. Leyds, when he passed the trust-deed of the Netherlands Railway Company in 1887. The flotation of the company gave opportunities for peculation which had not previously been thought of, and the company, once established, became a power in the State, almost as powerful as the Executive, and not to be got rid of. The revenue of the company had risen in 1896 to £3,000,000, of which five-sixths was contributed by the Rand alone.

A monopoly which pressed hardly on the mines was that under which dynamite could only be obtained from one man, who was supposed to manufacture it, but in reality imported it at about one-third of the price he sold it at. The agency has since become a Government one, but managed by a partner of the former *concessionnaire*. This gentleman, a member of the Executive, drew a commission of one shilling on every case sold, which gave a revenue in 1896 of £10,000 a year, annually increasing with the output.

The policy of the Boers is most clearly shown in the franchise laws, of which we have noticed the first, No. 1 of 1876; and the second, No. 7 of 1882. In the latter the five years' residence had to be proved from the field cornet's registers, which were hardly deserving the name, if they were kept up at all.

Law No. 4 of 1890 altered the Grond-wet or constitution by making a second Volksraad. Under this

law all existing voters at the time the law passed, or those who, being born in the State, obtain the vote at the age of sixteen, might elect to the First Raad. All others, on being enfranchised, could vote for the Second Raad only; but those who had for ten years been eligible for election to the Second Raad might obtain the right to vote for the First Raad.

To be eligible, a citizen must be over thirty, belong to the Protestant Church, reside and own land in the Republic, and have been naturalised at least two years.

In Law No. 3 of 1894 a far greater safeguard of the full burgher's rights and privileges was introduced. When a naturalised subject was in every other way entitled to these, he *might* obtain them 'provided the majority of burghers in his ward will signify in writing their desire that he should obtain them, and provided that the President and Executive see no objection to granting the same.'

It provided also that children born in the country shall take the status of their parents.

Under this law all Uitlanders might, at discretion, be disfranchised for ever.

It is remarkable that the London Convention contains no allusion to franchise, except indirectly in Article VII., under which the holders of land on the 8th August 1881 are confirmed in the civil rights they possessed on the 12th April 1877; and this fact has made it far more difficult for the Colonial Minister to support the Uitlanders in their endeavours to obtain justice.

Every man who has become acquainted with South Africa since 1880, and every student of its history,

knowing that the leaders of the Republic in 1881 had become the oligarchs of 1893 in Pretoria, and had successfully resisted every effort of the minority to upset their influence and authority, also that these leaders were well aware of the geographical and commercial disabilities of the two Republics, recognised that there were but two alternatives—fusion with the British Empire, or a South African Republic which should include the whole of South Africa under the Dutch flag.

The first of these was a matter of time in the ordinary course of events. The Dutch majority in South Africa, and even in the two Republics, was rapidly and surely diminishing. The voice of the disfranchised British subjects, who contributed nevertheless nine-tenths of the income of the Transvaal, was becoming louder every day. Their treatment might get worse; but it is an axiom of history that the persecuted prosper, and most certainly, from the advent of Lord Loch as High Commissioner, and of Mr. Chamberlain as Colonial Secretary, their voice has produced a feeling throughout the Empire which could not long remain unsatisfied.

Since 1881, however, the leaders of the South African Republic had determined, with the aid of all the Dutch-speaking race in South Africa (which they sedulously, and even seditiously, cultivated), to make one bid for their own supremacy.

Nominally this was for Dutch supremacy and independence, but really for the establishment throughout South Africa of a most grievous and corrupt tyranny, modelled on that of the Greek tyrants of old, but

saturated with every vice of government which subsequent centuries have introduced.

If it paid to reap the profits of monopolies and concessions in the Transvaal, to promote railways, and the manufacture or sale of daily necessities, such as dynamite, for the benefit of the tyrants, how much more would it pay to do this for the whole of South Africa? If seventy grandchildren of one man could be provided for, and even enriched at the expense of the commonwealth, and without diminishing appreciably the pickings of their grandfather, would not seventy times seven of their children again be provided for in the whole continent?

Once the British supremacy was removed, the Swazis and others would be at the mercy of their natural enemy and conqueror—the Boer—and the whole of the rich country to the north, developed recently by Mr. Rhodes, would again be open to the trekker and the land-grabber.

Any endeavour to indicate some of the causes that led to the South African War of 1899-1900 would be incomplete without a short account of the organisation which first circulated among the Dutch in South Africa the idea that they ought to be the paramount race.

We have already, perhaps prematurely, mentioned the Africander Bond, and here it is necessary to sketch its birth and object. It was, so to speak, the child of Mr. Reitz, an avowed Anglophobe, and was born in 1882, after Mr. Gladstone's first convention had opened the eyes of the Dutch to a possible triumph over their British rivals in South Africa, and to the safest way

to prepare for and attain that end. Its author soon found it necessary to establish himself in Pretoria, where as State Secretary he has been the bitter opponent of everything English. The principal leader of the Bond in Cape Colony was Mr. Hofmeyr, next to Cecil Rhodes the greatest and most influential man in the country. He, however, conducted the Bond on the safe lines prescribed for the Cape Colony, and used it to establish a strong party, with a majority in the Cape Colony; but it is by no means certain that he concurred in the views of its founder, which were clearly set forth in a local newspaper at Paarl, and afterwards published in a Dutch pamphlet called *De Transvaalse Oorlog*, which had a wide circulation. In its constitution the object of the Bond is defined as 'the formation of a South African nationality by means of union and co-operation as a preparation for the ultimate object, a United South Africa.' On the face of it this is a legitimate object, but in the pamphlet we find that 'a South African nationality' means not a nation in which Dutch and English shall be equals, and the two languages retained side by side, but a nation in which the Dutch would be dominant, and the English language banished from the land. 'A United South Africa' was not to be a confederation of States, each with its own flag, but a big Dutch Republic under a Republican flag. The restoration of the Transvaal to the Boers is regarded as giving the opportunity 'to start manufactures of the munitions of war' in the two Republics. Every Africander in the Cape Colony is enjoined to take care that he 'has a good rifle and a box of cartridges, and that he knows how to use them.

But the two Republics must go further.' They must, they are told:—'(1) Make their own ammunition, and (2) be well supplied with cannon, and provide a regiment of artillery to work with them.' The pamphleteer advocates a war preparation in the Republics, and a social war to be inaugurated throughout the whole of South Africa. No land is to be sold to the English. The English language is to be boycotted. It must be regarded as a disgrace to speak English. No English signboards are to be allowed. Trading associations are to be formed with Europe and the United States of America, and Dutch and German firms are to be invited to send out their goods, and an extract from an Amsterdam newspaper is quoted with approval that, 'when in course of time the Dutch language shall universally prevail in South Africa, this most extensive territory will become a North America for Holland, and enable us to balance the Anglo-Saxon race.' The English nation is politely spoken of as a gang of robbers and murderers, but an Englishman who 'is willing to become an Africander, and acknowledge *our land* and people and language, then we will acknowledge him as our countryman.' Unearthing this precious pamphlet at this time has been the work of Mr. Slater, of Grahamstown, who has translated it bodily into English, so that whatever is *now* the professed aim of the Bond in the Cape Colony, its real constitution and the design of its founders (which has been the basis of the action of the Transvaal Republic from that time forth) is now manifest. It is only necessary to add that at the time these articles first appeared in *De Patriot* at Paarl, not fifty miles from Cape

Town, in the Cape Colony, Dr. Reitz was a 'judge' in the Orange Free State, and was presumably acquainted in some measure with International Law.

We have seen the causes that were steadily working for the open rupture between the Dutch and English in South Africa, and secondly for a crisis in the Transvaal itself. The Government there, growing daily more tyrannous and more retrograde, alienated the sympathies of the rest of South Africa by refusing to join their Customs Union, by passing strong protective measures against their imports, and perhaps, most of all, by refusing employment to the Cape Dutch who wished to settle in the Republic. There was also a growing feeling among the more liberal-minded Boers that the franchise legislation and the education laws were absolutely opposed to the maintenance of that '*eindracht*,' or unity, which was the strength of their State and the essence of their original Constitution. The Uitlanders, none of whom were at that time disloyal to the Republic, were forced to form a National Union for the purpose of obtaining their just rights by constitutional means. In the case of residents who had settled before August 1881, these rights were fully guaranteed by Law No. 1 of 1876, Article XII. of the Convention of 1881, and Article VII. of that of 1884; but the Raad had cancelled the first, and the British Government was too feeble, apparently, to insist on the maintenance of the Convention, which was, as we have seen, disregarded and encroached upon in every direction.

Before the Franchise Law of 1894 every constitutional means was used to obtain an extension

of the franchise to full burgher rights, the only one that gave the holder any real power as a citizen or voter.

A petition signed by 13,000 Uitlanders was received by the Raad with open derision in 1893, but the next year the National Union got up one signed by no less than 35,483 aliens, in every way qualified for the full citizenship. This met with strong support from the Boer Progressists, and as strong opposition from the President and his party. The result was, as we have seen, Law No. 3 of 1894, one result of which was to convince many Uitlanders that their rights would have to be obtained by their growing numbers and the employment of a *coup d'état*, to be effected peaceably if possible.

The great capitalists, who had up to this time held aloof from the franchise agitation, and had trusted that in the end their financial power would obtain for them the legislation they needed on commercial questions and the employment of natives, now threw in their lot with the National Union, cautiously at first, and with no thought of deserting the Republic. Among these men was the Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, Mr. Cecil Rhodes, who was the head of the Consolidated Goldfields Company. As we have seen, he had already extended the power of his countrymen as far as the Zambesi, and kept up the communication with the north through Griqualand West and Matabeleland. He had started his career in Johannesburg under the Republic, and his intimate knowledge of its rulers had convinced him that the future of South Africa as a confederation depended upon its being united in free

units under one flag, and that the flag of Great Britain. Never in his career has he forgotten this cardinal principle, though once, as we shall see, circumstances and the impetuosity of his agents combined to defeat a train of events that would quickly and perhaps peaceably have brought about his great object. His influence first caused the question of 'Under which flag?' to be considered among the Uitlanders, and in proportion as the Dutch Government grew more anti-English, being intolerably tyrannous as well as incompetent, so this question came to the front. True liberty in South Africa was only to be had under the British flag, but this idea was new and of slow growth, and it was specially opposed by the American and German Uitlanders.

In September of 1894 the Raad refused petitions to allow the English language to be taught in the schools for *more than three hours a week*, by a majority of twelve votes to ten, alleging that the tendency of the people to use the English language must be opposed. The introduction of the penny postage was also refused by thirteen votes to nine, causing increased discontent.

Meanwhile outside the Republic events also were in favour of the British flag. The British South Africa Company, founded under Mr. Rhodes in 1889, had in 1893 conquered Matabeleland with the aid of the mother-country; and in 1894 the Tongaland chiefs placed themselves under the same flag, thus closing the last outlet to the sea possible to the Republic.

Great feeling was stirred up by an attempt to commandeer British subjects for an expedition against a petty chief named Malabosch in 1895, but Sir Henry

Loch, the High Commissioner, at once visited Pretoria and the exemption of British subjects was secured, but not the compensation of those who had been forcibly and illegally commandeered. During his second term as President, Mr. Kruger's open favouritism of his own relations had done much to lessen his popularity among the Boers, and he now used all the legal forms of a loosely framed constitution to ensure his tenure of power. He thus secured the exclusion of Mr. Esselen, the leader of the Progressist party, from the Raad which controlled the Presidential election, and was himself eventually returned in 1894 by 7881 votes against 7009 given for General Piet Joubert. To secure also a majority in the Executive Council, in which three of the five members opposed him, he introduced a Mr. Kock, one of his supporters, as paid minute-keeper with a vote, thus dividing the Council equally, and by his own casting-vote securing the majority.

Early in 1895 the Netherlands Railway Company endeavoured by delaying goods at the frontier, and at the Johannesburg Railway terminus, as well as by a freightage per mile of more than three times the amount charged by the Cape or Natal lines, to secure a greater share of the profits, though working only fifty miles of line. To avoid this, the goods were off-loaded at the frontier, and taken by road to Johannesburg by the drifts in the Vaal. Mr. Kruger, however, suddenly closed the drifts against all over-sea goods. This was at once reported by the High Commissioner to the Secretary of State, Mr. Chamberlain, who had come to see that the

position of Great Britain in South Africa was an Imperial one, and that breaches of the Convention must be opposed in unmistakable terms. It was clearly understood that war might result; but as soon as arrangements were made for supporting it, Mr. Chamberlain presented an ultimatum to the Republic, and the drifts were at once reopened.

This question had, however, still further alienated the Free State and all parties in the Cape from the Transvaal, and had strengthened the hands of the small party in the latter who wished to come under the British flag.

The possibility of having to send a large force to South Africa now took definite shape at home, and it seemed to the writer to be inevitable. The President's party made 'Independence' their battle-cry; but the Progressist Boers knew that this meant only the maintenance of the oligarchy and of every kind of abuse. After the great franchise debate in August 1895, the President of the National Union, Mr. Charles Leonard, and his party began to import arms, and it was no secret in Johannesburg that a *coup d'état* was being prepared for. As Prime Minister of Cape Colony Mr. Rhodes could not countenance this, but as Administrator of the Chartered Company, and as a leading capitalist in the Rand, he not only countenanced it, but actively aided the scheme. His representative in Matabeleland, Dr. Jameson, was authorised to concentrate the Company's police-force on the border, and to make arrangements with the leaders in the Rand. These arrangements, made in September, were that a force of fifteen hundred

mounted police, fully equipped with Maxims and field artillery, as well as fifteen hundred spare rifles and a supply of ammunition, was to be held in readiness on the border to support the Johannesburg rising whenever it took place; five thousand rifles, three Maxims, and one million rounds of ammunition were to be smuggled into Johannesburg, so that the united forces might amount to nine thousand armed men with artillery. It was known that there were in the fort at Pretoria a large quantity of arms and ammunition carelessly guarded by, at most, one hundred men of the State Artillery. A vital part of the scheme was to seize this fort, and thus to some extent disarm the Government, after which the reforms needed could be insisted on. While the National Union leaders did not contemplate more than reform, and Mr. Rhodes himself saw clearly that, with the extended franchise, his own scheme of federation under the British flag was only a matter of time, Dr. Jameson and the officers under him, who had been lent to the Chartered Company by the home Government, saw in the whole scheme a short cut to the possession of Pretoria and the annexation of the Transvaal, or at least of the Rand. Most of these officers were of good birth and standing, but they had entered the Company's service as military adventurers. The history of the Company and the conquest of Matabeleland made them think they had only to act to secure Imperial support, and the development of Rhodesia showed them that fortunes lost at home might be more than remade in South Africa. Dr. Jameson, a man of great administrative power and devoted to Mr. Rhodes, saw

that British supremacy in South Africa was his ultimate goal, and thought, by making use of the reform movement in Johannesburg, that he could anticipate history and arrive at that goal at once. At his second visit to Johannesburg in November he obtained from the Committee a letter of invitation to 'come to our aid, should a disturbance arise here. The circumstances are so extreme that, etc., etc.' Now although the Reformers wished for his assistance, they had no intention of handing over the Republic to England, but only of reforming its misgovernment. They soon began to repent of the impatience of their allies, and of having committed themselves to those who openly wanted to hoist the Union Jack instead of the *Vierkleur* at Pretoria. They were unable to obtain arms as fast as they wished, having only got three thousand, and found also that Dr. Jameson's force would not exceed eight hundred, instead of the fifteen hundred promised. The rising was planned for either December 28th or January 4th, and to put the Boer Government off the scent a mass meeting of Uitlanders was advertised for January 6th. Mr. Leonard prepared and published a manifesto[1] stating clearly their grievances and the objects of the National Union. 'How to obtain these' was to be the question for the meeting. Meanwhile Dr. Jameson at Pitsani, who was in telegraphic communication with his brother at Johannesburg and with Mr. Rhodes at Cape Town, became more impatient as the Reformers became less confident. Having repeatedly urged them to 'make

[1] See Appendix.

cutting,' and as often been told it was necessary to 'postpone flotation'—the latter term referring to the rising at Johannesburg, and the former to cutting telegraphic communication with Cape Town—he resolved to make the first move himself, and force the hands of the Reformers. On the 26th and 28th messengers were sent to secure Dr. Jameson's not moving; both arrived in time, but only to join in his movement. On the 27th Dr. Jameson telegraphed to his brother and to the Secretary of the Chartered Company at Cape Town his intention to start in any case, and added that the wires might be cut. The Reformers refused to move without specific assurances on the flag question, to which Mr. Rhodes would not commit himself. Accordingly Dr. Jameson fell back on his letter, and cabled it to the Press in England; the sentence quoted above being materially altered in the English papers, it read ' . . . come to our aid. Should disturbance arise here, the circumstances are so extreme that, etc. etc.' He then assembled his men at 3 P.M. on the 29th, read them the above letter, and after a short speech started for Johannesburg with three hundred and fifty of the Chartered Company's force under Sir John Willoughby, and one hundred and twenty of the Bechuanaland Frontier Police under Major Grey.

Food and fodder had been previously stationed along the route by their friends, and the march was continuous for the first seventy hours, in which they covered one hundred and thirty out of the one hundred and seventy miles before them. At 11 A.M. on Tuesday 31st, they were overtaken by a despatch

rider with positive orders from England to Dr. Jameson and separately to his four principal officers to return at once. The force, however, continued to march on Krugersdorp, shadowed by a commando of three hundred Boers. Further orders to retire reached them through the Resident at Pretoria; to these Dr. Jameson replied on Wednesday at 6 A.M. that having no supplies left in rear, he must proceed to the aid of his fellow-men in Johannesburg. Outside Krugersdorp, about 3 P.M. on January 1st, occurred the first real engagement, and by 11 P.M. Dr. Jameson had been driven to seek higher ground towards Doorn Kop. It was open to him to have pushed on by the Johannesburg road, but his party did not know the country, and were misled by a Boer guide, probably on purpose. The Boers had by this time brought up a large force (some fifteen hundred men with artillery) by rail, having concluded an armistice with the Johannesburgers; they occupied a strong position enclosing Dr. Jameson's line of advance, and by 9.30 A.M. on January 2nd the latter surrendered, on condition that the lives of his men were spared. This was accepted by Commandant Cronje, provided the expense caused to the Republic was reimbursed; the force was then disarmed, marched into Krugersdorp, and conveyed to Pretoria.

Neither Dr. Jameson nor the Reformers had ever thought such a fiasco possible, and it was at first believed that the force had laid down their arms in obedience to orders from the High Commissioner. The latter, Sir Hercules Robinson, whose intervention had been eventually asked for, left Cape Town on

the evening of the 2nd, and in two days arrived at Pretoria. The Government there looked to his assistance in dealing with the twenty thousand Uitlanders in Johannesburg. On Monday, the 6th, Sir Hercules Robinson opened negotiations by expressing the profound regret of her Majesty's Government for the Raid, and their thanks for the President's moderation. The President then gave Johannesburg twenty-four hours to lay down its arms unconditionally, he having now eight thousand burghers under arms. He had previously in his proclamation promised to lay all grievances before the Raad without delay. The High Commissioner advised the Reformers to yield, and Mr. Chamberlain concurred. The British Resident was sent with the Ultimatum, and on the 7th he assured the Reform Committee that, should they act on the advice of the High Commissioner, 'not a hair of any one's head would be touched,' and 'not one of you would lose his liberty for a single hour.' They then resolved to yield, and immediately a change came over Mr. Kruger's conduct of the negotiations. Instead of handing over Dr. Jameson and his men as he had promised, he said that he would give his final decision about them 'as soon as Johannesburg shall have reverted to a condition of quietness and order.' This was on the 9th, and on that day he issued a proclamation expressly exempting the Reform leaders from the promised amnesty. On the 10th he issued a soft-worded address to the people of Johannesburg, and the same day he clapped sixty of the Reform leaders into gaol, and thus secured his Government from further agitation on their part. Mr. Chamberlain

took up from the first a strong and definite line, admitting to the full the guilt of Dr. Jameson, and insisting equally strongly on the necessity of the reforms demanded by the National Union.

In 1897 his hands were strengthened by the appointment of Sir Alfred Milner as High Commissioner, and public opinion in the Empire now thoroughly supported his policy.

In 1898 the Uitlanders drew up a petition to the Queen on the lines of the manifesto of 1895, and it was favourably received, and became a factor in the negotiations which led in the following year to the Bloemfontein Conference.

The original policy of the Africander Bond had been established openly in the Transvaal after the Raid. Objection could hardly be taken to precautions directed against a recurrence of such dangers. Pretoria was strongly fortified, Johannesburg was commanded by a large fort, a State Arsenal was formed, and immense quantities of arms and ammunition were purchased on the Continent with money wrung from the Uitlanders and the Rand. Dr. Leyds was employed to obtain skilled military assistance, and every year saw the preparations for establishing Dutch supremacy more forward. The revenue increased, as we have seen, by leaps and bounds, and as it increased so did the expenditure intended to secure the oligarchy against interference until it should be strong enough to clear South Africa of the English. Dutch propaganda and secret service money were freely distributed in Cape Colony, and it was known that considerable support could be counted on there, while the party of Mr. Fraser, in the Free

State, had entirely succumbed since the Raid to that of Mr. Steyn, which was closely allied to the old Dopper party of Mr. Kruger.

Mr. Chamberlain saw the necessity of strengthening his demands by an increase of force corresponding to that in the Transvaal, and the failure of the Bloemfontein Conference led to the calling out of the Army reserves on October 7th. This was immediately followed on the 9th by the Ultimatum of Mr. Kruger demanding the withdrawal of the British forces sent to South Africa. The next day the Free State Raad, by a small majority, made common cause with the South African Republic; and on the 11th October, 1899, war was declared, which will settle for ever the question of supremacy in South Africa, and secure to every deserving citizen an equal share in the government of his adopted country.

This sketch does not pretend to give more than facts, but I would have liked to trace the evolution of events and to show logically that the war of 1899-1900 was just as necessary to South Africa as the French Revolution of 1793 was to Europe.

Note.—Since writing the above, an excellent pamphlet on the subject by the Rev. E. Price, of Bishop-Auckland, has been given me by its author, and later still, Mr. Ireland's *Anglo-Boer Conflict* has been sent me; this has, it seems to me, said the last word on the recent phases of a much-controverted question.

CHAPTER II

THE BOER TACTICS AND THEIR FORCES

LOOKING at the map we see the two South African Republics surrounded, except at one point, with British territory, or, which is practically the same thing, with territory under British protection. We have seen that the natural tendency of the Boer race is to expand or trek into new and unprotected territories, where they might settle, with or without the consent of the natives, who could not, in their opinion, own property as they did, and really existed in the country for the advantage of the Whites, that is, themselves.

Their endeavours to reduce the Swazis, Baralongs, and Basutos to their ideal condition of serfdom, or helotage, had lately added a serious difference with the paramount power to the many and growing differences we have noted in the preceding sketch. Granted, however, that the possibility of further expansion except as British subjects was denied them, those of them who wished to develop their own rich and productive country had another and more real, because more justifiable, grievance. They must have ultimately, at the option of the paramount power, been

commercially strangled. Only one port to which they had access was not wholly British, and that one, Delagoa Bay, could, by treaty, be ceded or sold by Portugal to no other power but Great Britain.

Except a few German and French liners along the west coast, their whole trade by sea must be carried in British ships, after paying whatever duties might be imposed upon it.

Both Mr. Kruger and Mr. Reitz saw from the beginning of their efforts for Dutch supremacy in South Africa that this question of free outlet was essential; and if they could not, as they hoped, command and control every port, their first steps should at any rate be directed to seize and to hold at least one of them, and the country that gave access to it.

Hence for this as well as other reasons we find the mass of their, at first, almost overwhelming forces collected on the roads leading towards Durban through Ladysmith and Pietermaritzburg. The other reasons are obvious from the map. Two lines of rail converge on Ladysmith, and while an entrance into Natal, with its scanty garrison, could not well be denied, the Drakensberg passes could be made wellnigh impregnable by the Federals as against a force seeking to invade the Republics; and the whole of Northern Natal, intersected by deep and rapid rivers, and the Maloutsi, as well as the Drakensberg Mountains, formed an ideal theatre for the Boer method of fighting. It is easy to be wise after the event, and to see that if they had from the first only thought of containing Sir George White's small force, and had thrown their whole strength into the extremely disaffected

country in the north of Cape Colony, they might not only have added largely to their own strength, but have made themselves so strong in British territory round Stormberg and Arundel that they would have been extremely difficult to dislodge.

Hence the opening of the ball in Natal, where, for political reasons, Sir George White was obliged to occupy too extended a front from west to east. He was soon forced to concentrate on his left at Ladysmith, where, by his brilliant defence with some ten thousand men, he acted as a retaining force for more than double that number, and thereby saved Natal. In saving Natal, as Captain Lambton remarked afterwards, he saved the Empire. Undoubtedly the invulnerability of the British Empire can only be measured by that of its weakest threatened point, and that at the end of 1899 was most certainly Northern Natal.

But turning to other considerations, we find from the map that the main lines of rail from south to north give to the power that controls them and the sea, and to a civilised European army, the surest and best combined lines of advance against the Republics. By this I mean those lines which provide the shortest access, not only to Bloemfontein, one of their vital points, but also into territory less suitable for Boer tactics, and less difficult for European transport.

It must be remembered that with knowledge of the country, the affections of the majority, at least, of the inhabitants, with 'salted' horses, and almost unlimited personal endurance and activity, the Boers had, anywhere in South Africa away from the lines of rail, far

greater mobility in every respect than their opponents. The great raid into the south of the Orange Free State after the fall of Bloemfontein is the best possible proof of this.

In their independence of all stores, in the mobility of their least mobile troops, and especially in their power of moving even the heaviest guns of position, they surpass any force known to history, excepting, perhaps, the Americans in 1866; and we may add that in Generals Louis Botha, Olivier, and De Wet, their country has produced no unworthy successors to Generals Grant, Lee, and Sherman, and brilliant and even successful rivals to Generals French, Hamilton, and Hunter. In considering the country as a theatre of war, a few words about the Boer methods of fighting are not out of place. The European art of war has grown from the experience of hundreds of years, and has entirely altered with the improvement in fire-arms. The Boer method, on the other hand, dates at the earliest from the Grand Trek, and more strictly, perhaps, from the trek across the Vaal under Pretorius. It was then first that they found themselves forced on their eastern border to fight the Zulus in their own land. They were already provided with good fire-arms, and took care, for their own safety, promptly to adopt every improvement in them that was introduced. Soon after the Civil War some American settlers brought over Remingtons or Winchester repeating rifles, and the additional power given by the magazine was quickly appreciated. The Transvaalers, however, insensibly adopted the method of fighting of their chief opponents, the Zulus, the

most warlike race they had yet encountered, as they found that by doing so they gained the full advantage of their rifles in bringing a converging and enfilading fire to bear on their yet distant and, therefore, powerless enemy.

The formation of the Zulu impi was that of a wide crescent, with which they sought to outflank and envelop their enemy.

The first principle of strategy, which brings a force superior to that of the enemy within striking distance at a preconcerted moment, was not unknown to the Zulus or neglected by the Boers. This we shall find signally and successfully demonstrated at the action of Koorn Spruit, where another art learned from the Zulus was also exemplified. These latter when attacking an enemy better armed but inferior in number were wont, like all savages, to lay an ambush; and the Boers soon found that they must thoroughly understand this method of fighting, by which troops were delivered into the hands of their enemy at close quarters before they had either fired a shot or suspected his presence. The art of war, even in Europe, where the face of the country less often lends itself to such situations, has not neglected their consideration, and the security of a force is never properly guaranteed without provision for thorough and systematic searching the country both in front and flank as it advances.

The lack of system in this, the habit of superficial examination that has resulted from manœuvres in more open country at home, where no considerable force can be easily hid, has accounted in no small

measure for the frontal attacks on unknown and unexplored positions, which, while strongly held by thousands of Mauser rifles, their owners' horses being hidden in the immediate neighbourhood, were thought (up to the moment when they opened fire at a decisive range on troops who were sometimes still undeployed) to be either evacuated, or held by a very small rearguard. In many cases the general thought he had taken every precaution by a distant bombardment, which he called a reconnaissance in force, but which, if it produced any reply at all, only resulted in a few shots fired from some point calculated to mislead our artillery and troops as to the real position which they had to attack.

Heavy losses have resulted in consequence; and it is only now that this combination of savage warlike instinct, backed by the latest weapons of war, begins to be thoroughly appreciated and grappled with.

The more advanced students of tactics in the British army have, during the last thirty years, made the mistake in most instances of studying European warfare and the foreign regulations that have been deduced therefrom, without remembering that what was applicable at St. Privat or Plevna, though good in principle in all war, yet requires considerable modification in practice, either in the Tirah or South Africa.

Others again, whose experience has been on the frontiers of India or in the Sudan, have sought to apply this without modification on the banks of the Tugela or the mountains of the northern Cape Colony. In every case, where experience has not been treated

as a local example of the application of the art of war, the result has been disappointing, if not disastrous. The resources of a general consist in his power to apply these elementary principles to every locality and every class of enemy; and that man who trusts merely to his limited personal experience, without studying these principles and their application in each case, will sooner or later find himself face to face with a problem beyond his knowledge and outside his experience. Theories without practice, or ideas without experience, resemble faith without works, and are as incompatible with the good soldier as the latter is with the good Christian.

Before considering the British forces in the next chapter, it is advisable to consider what they had to meet, remembering that the munitions imported into the Transvaal since the formation of the Africander Bond, and more particularly since the ill-starred Jameson Raid, could not be unknown to the Director of Military Intelligence in London, and were by him submitted to the Commander-in-Chief in due course each year.

Nevertheless, so consistently had the Boers backed out of any appeal to arms, and so prevalent was the belief, in Government and official circles at home, that all difficulties would with patience be eventually settled, that small notice was taken of these reports which, in the ordinary course, got pigeon-holed with a number of others of apparently equal importance and little urgency.

The civil and military organisation of the two Republics was based on the territorial divisions or

districts, each of which was under a Landdrost or Prefect. The South African Republic had seventeen such districts, the Free State eight only.

Each division comprised a certain number of electoral areas, each one under a field-cornet, who was both a civil mayor, in the French sense, and also responsible for, and in command of, the fighting strength of those under him. Each such body answered to a local volunteer company of varying strength.

The field-cornets of each district elected a commandant, and their aggregated forces formed the local commando. In their turn the commandants elected a commandant-general.

At the age of sixteen every lad was provided with a Mauser rifle and ammunition, of which he carried two hundred rounds in a bandolier slung over his shoulder. At the age of sixty he could return these to store, and was no longer liable for service.

During the war, however, every available lad and man, irrespective of age, came forward to serve his country; and in the trenches in Natal and also at Paardeberg were women, who, in many cases, could shoot as well as their husbands and fathers. The Mauser, with its magazine of five cartridges, and range of nearly two thousand two hundred yards, proved itself at least as effective a weapon as the Lee-Metford, and in one respect, that the magazine was more easily charged by means of a clip, was its superior. By means of this as many as twenty-five shots can be fired in one minute.

The burghers liable for service were divided into three classes: first, all from eighteen to thirty-four

years of age; second, all from thirty-four to fifty; and third, those from sixteen to eighteen and from fifty to sixty.

Every man had to provide his horse, saddlery, clothing, and provisions for two days, generally carried in the form of biltong or dried meat, or of German sausages.

Each field-cornet might commandeer both provisions and transport, and each commandant was responsible that his force was so provided. Independent firing in extended order, coupled with rapid movements on horseback, was the only kind of manœuvre practised. In some commandoes each man would have two or even three horses, which would follow him like a dog and remain quiet even under fire wherever their master left them, coming up at his call when he needed to change his position. No forage except the grass on the veldt was ever needed, and by changing his mount the Boer was sometimes able to accomplish feats of marching and fighting which are unequalled in history. The horsemanship and endurance of the rider even exceeded the stamina and docility of his steed.

The only standing force consisted of the State Artillery, trained mainly by German ex-officers, and the State Police.

Of artillery the Transvaal possessed, at the beginning of 1900, thirteen batteries of four guns each and twenty-four Maxims; the Free State had twenty-four field-guns and six Maxims only.

Besides these there were at Pretoria no less than twenty-four guns of 75 mm., sixteen Creusot and

eight Krupp, capable of carrying shell five miles and of firing eight shots a minute. With each gun was one hundred and forty-four rounds. Among their one hundred and six field-guns they had sixteen Vickers-Maxim Q.F. 12 prs., of five thousand yards range, eight Maxim-Nordenfeldt guns, eight field howitzers of 12 cm., four being Krupp and four Creusot, and four Krupp guns of one and a half inch calibre. They had also four heavy guns (100 prs.) with a range of twelve thousand yards, which Tommy Atkins christened 'Long Toms,' and fifteen Creusot six-inch Q.F. guns. In all they had one hundred and eighty guns of different calibres and forty thousand Mausers with twenty-five million Mauser cartridges with smokeless powder. They had in store a large quantity of Martini-Henry rifles with black powder cartridges. At the commencement of the war they had not less than five or six hundred rounds for each gun as well as an arsenal at Pretoria constantly manufacturing more, as well as rapidly repairing any damage done to any of the guns on service.

According to returns published by the Chamber of Commerce in Johannesburg the numbers of Boers in the year 1898 were:—

In Cape Colony . . .	265,000
In the Free State . .	98,000
In the Transvaal . . .	150,000
Total .	513,000

Thus the two Republics had a population of two hundred and forty-eight thousand on whom they could depend for service.

Of these we can reckon on fifty thousand as able to bear arms in defence of their country.

They might also reckon on ten thousand foreigners among the Uitlanders who might join them, and we know that for months a constant stream of Dutchmen, French, German, Swedish, and even American subjects poured into the Transvaal through the open door at Lorenzo Marques, through which also, in piano cases and provision barrels, both arms and ammunition were continually reaching Pretoria.

The gold commandeered in the banks and got from the mines provided an ample store from which both men and material were paid for without materially diminishing the millions which Mr. Kruger afterwards took away with him or sent to Europe, and without, of course, touching his very large investments on the Continent.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

CHAPTER III

THE BRITISH ARMY IN SOUTH AFRICA

THE constitution of an army corps as it is by regulation, the various units of each branch of the service, the terms of voluntary enlistment, the duration of service with the colours and the reserve, are well known to all military men, and to many of the readers of the daily and periodical press, in which a flood of information on matters purely military has lately been published.

The constitution of the army in South Africa, however, though not in any way secret or unknown to intelligent and constant readers of the papers, is far less correctly and generally known. Its genesis, growth, and daily condition are matters of extraordinary interest, both to the tax-payer, who has never previously had such an instrument in his service, and to the student of history, as Great Britain has never before put such an army in the field.

Not second to these in interest is the provision for wastage, or the arrangement for reinforcing the army thousands of miles from its original, and also hundreds from its immediate, base. Lastly, the measures necessary for transport to South Africa, for supply

and transport there, and the cost of the whole and of each part are matters of great interest to the military student.

The above subjects to be exhaustively treated would in themselves require a volume of considerable size, and it is my endeavour to give as concisely as possible some account of their most salient features, and of those that were exceptional to meet the emergencies that arose. Although, at the end of 1895, a force had already been selected to proceed to South Africa and obtain for British subjects in the South African Republic that equitable treatment which the Conventions prescribed, owing to the Raid it was never sent; and when, in August 1899, the forces in South Africa were augmented, it was not at first with a view to an aggressive or punitive campaign.

It was seen that while Natal would be the first Colony threatened or invaded, any counter-stroke must come from Cape Colony by one or more of the lines of railway from Port Elizabeth, East London, or Cape Town.

Prior to the outbreak of the war, and while every one, who did not possess that knowledge of the Boer leaders that we now have, still hoped the negotiations might be peaceably settled, there were in Cape Colony two companies of the R.A., one of the R.E. (with detachments in Natal and St. Helena), and three and a half battalions of infantry, with details; while in Natal we find two regiments of cavalry, one mountain battery, three batteries R.F.A., three battalions of infantry, and details, the whole under the command of Sir W. Butler, K.C.B. These forces were obviously

insufficient for any purpose, and were reinforced before October 11th as follows:—

To Natal from India: three regiments of cavalry (of whom the 9th Lancers went afterwards to Cape Town), three batteries R.F.A., and four battalions of infantry; from England: one field company R.E., half the 8th (Railway) Company R.E., section of Telegraph Battalion and Balloon Section R.E., with four companies A.S.C.; from Cape Town, two battalions of infantry, and the same from Egypt, one from Gibraltar, and one from Crete.

The whole of this force was placed under General Sir George White, who had been Commander-in-Chief in India, and was about to take up the Governorship of Gibraltar when he was ordered to South Africa.

To Cape Town there went from England three batteries R.F.A., one field company, and the other half of the 8th (Railway) Company R.E., two companies A.S.C., two battalions of infantry, and one from Malta, while the headquarters and remaining half of the 2nd Yorkshire L.I. were brought from Mauritius.

The reasons for the above drafts were obvious. In India the troops are always on a war footing, and could be landed in Natal, where danger was first apprehended, in little over a fortnight. Thus Natal was first reinforced from India; but as policy forbids us to remove from that empire more troops than are absolutely necessary, the reinforcements for the Cape Colony were sent from those immediately available at home and in the Mediterranean. Similarly the first troops to return after the war will be those who were lent from India.

We find under Sir George White a field force made up of four regiments of cavalry, seven batteries, and thirteen battalions, with four and a half companies A.S.C., ready to meet the expected invasion if the Boers declared war. At the Cape there were seven battalions more, with one regiment of cavalry and three batteries, as well as R.E. and fortress units. General Sir W. F. Butler was replaced by General Sir Forestier Walker, from Plymouth. Such information about the Boers' preparations for war as had reached the home Government from the Cape was supplied mainly through Sir William Butler.

Considering the forces detailed above, we find them quite inadequate to cope with those known to be available to the Boers, either in numbers or in constitution. Against a force moving in sympathetic districts, with every man mounted, and the resources of each farm at their disposal, dispensing with any baggage-train except for ammunition, it was necessary to provide a force both self-supporting and, above all, mobile. Nevertheless, the irregular element of mounted colonists who knew the country was not readily recognised, at home, to be absolutely essential, both as the eyes of the force and also its security. It is hardly too much to say that the usefulness of troops like Warren's, Methuen's, or Carrington's Horse, in former wars, should have proved, to those who were organising the defence, that they were more indispensable than regular cavalry, though by no means a substitute for them. In the Cape Mounted Rifles and Police we possessed an excellent nucleus for such a force, but small effort was made at first to expand them, and

even later much was left to the individual efforts of staff officers like Bethune, Thorneycroft, A'Court, Baden-Powell, and others, not to mention the gallant Major Childe, who lost his life.

The essential element of South African white population was hardly realised at home. They often exist, and keep their lives and property secure, mainly by means of their rifle, like all true Boers, many of whom it must not be forgotten were our most loyal subjects and the germ of our irregular levies in 1900. A Boer does not mean only an inhabitant of the two Republics or a Dutchman, it means a farmer simply, in a land where rifles are more used in farming than ploughs, and where cattle are too useful for draught purposes to be readily sent to the butcher's.

One element of success was available to the English, field artillery. They had altogether, in the summer of 1899, twenty-one batteries R.H.A., and ninety-five R.F.A., besides mountain batteries, on the establishment. The State Artillery of the Transvaal numbered only four hundred men, and could provide perhaps two batteries of field artillery.

Clearly the English should have a crushing predominance in this arm, and a battery to each battalion would not at first have been too great a proportion in South Africa; but we find Sir George White with seven batteries to thirteen battalions, while in Cape Colony there were three batteries to seven battalions.

England had one hundred and fifty-seven regular line battalions, but only twenty were at the Cape.

However, on October 7th, an additional force of

about fifty thousand men, under General Sir Redvers Buller, was ordered to be mobilised between the 9th and 17th of that month. Stores of all sorts had been accumulated for some time previously, and the first of these troops left England on the 20th October. The last to sail embarked on November 15th, there having been no hitch in the arrangements anywhere. They took with them two batteries R.H.A., fifteen batteries R.F.A. (including three armed with howitzers of greater range and heavier shell-power than the field-guns in use), four field companies R.E., the 1st Telegraph Division, the 10th (Railway) Company, Pontoon Troop, and a second Balloon Section, with a Field Park R.E.

The home country was practically drained of A.S.C. and R.A.M.C. troops to supply this first army corps, and when the Eighth Division had left England later, the military hospitals at home had to be managed almost entirely by civilians, reservists, or volunteers. In this force all men under twenty years of age were replaced by reservists, and in themselves constituted a large force of 'battalion details' at home, which were generally attached to their affiliated Militia battalions as soon as they were embodied, and constituted a reserve of trained young soldiers at home. Sir Redvers Buller was appointed Commander-in-Chief in South Africa.

I have been already anticipated in describing the details of this force and its constitution, and must refer to Captain Moore's admirable article in the December number of the *R. E. Journal*, and to Lieutenant-Colonel Brunker's tables of a later date,

showing the distribution of our troops in South Africa.

A few words on the means that were taken at home to replace waste from disease or action at the seat of war may not be out of place.

In addition to the 'battalion details' mentioned above, all of whom, it must be remembered, were fast approaching the requisite age (twenty) in October 1899, the affiliated Militia battalions were embodied, and in most cases raised to war strength, and provided with regimental transport and a machine gun apiece.

The force now sent to South Africa was considerably more than the full establishment of an army corps, but the additions were selected not because they would supply our needs in Cape Colony or Natal, but because they were available to be sent without delay.

During the last months of 1899, when inevitable reverses attended the numerical inferiority, the want of training and experience in Boer warfare, the shorter range of the British field-guns (not Q.F.), and the want of stamina in their horses, not to mention again the unsuitable constitution of the European army corps which had been sent to South Africa, it is not too much to say that the lion in the British race throughout the world was fairly roused. The low electric roar with which, from the furthest colonies, he announced his will to 'see this thing through,' whatever happened, will never be forgotten by Great Britain or by other nations.

The months of October and November immortalised and perpetuated the present system of short service

and large reserves; that of December was the death-blow to any idea that the European model army corps was suitably constituted for fighting either in India or Africa; while that and the following months saw the birth of that federal army that springs 'broad based upon the people's will,' a full-fledged weapon of war in a just cause.

General Hutton, Sir Charles Warren, and perhaps Mr. Rhodes were perhaps the only influential or important believers in the power of our colonists in Canada, Australasia, and South Africa to put a proved weapon in the hands of the home Government at a few weeks' notice. In India Lord Roberts had demonstrated that an even more valuable weapon, capable of engaging a European Power if need be, is available for the defence of that continent.

The South African War of 1899-1900 will be for ever memorable in the annals of England and of the federated British Empire for the demonstration of the great possibilities of the latter. It has indeed a potential which, had Sir George Grey actually realised it, has no need of the American race, except as friends and honorary associates, to meet the world in arms. With India able to protect itself against all comers, with the growing spirit that the British Empire, there and elsewhere, exists for each member of it, and not for the enrichment of individuals or the mother-country merely; with the conviction that the British flag flies, its tricolour, more than ensures Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity to all who owe it allegiance; that

> '. . . The voice of a satisfied people may keep
> A sound in her ears like the sound of the deep,'

its gracious Queen still lives to hand to her son traditions that will henceforth be binding on whosoever wears her crown after her.

Her reign, blessed and acclaimed by every race and tongue throughout the world, has seen the birth and development of what Lord Carnarvon believed in, and a greater, if misled, genius first called 'the Greater Britain.'

Greater it every day becomes, freer and more independent each member of it will be, until the dream of Sir George Grey of the future of 'the English-speaking race throughout the world' and that of the author of the *Trade Policy of Federation* are accomplished.

If, then, this little island, in the inevitable course of history, retires into a green and yet vigorous old age, if developments no longer take place within its shores, yet not even Imperial Rome will have surpassed the city of London as the cradle and nursing mother of the greatest Empire the world has ever seen or will see until the last day.

But to return to the army, which may truly be called the instrument both of Empire and of civilisation. The defeat at Colenso, where we lost over eleven hundred men, decided the home Government on three things:—

(1) That it was not fair to ask Sir Redvers Buller to do more than his work in Natal.

(2) That a blow must be struck through the Free State by an adequate and suitable army commanded by a tried general.

(3) Largely to increase the artillery and the colonial mounted contingents.

With regard to the first, since Sir Redvers Buller had left home in October, the campaign in Natal had assumed enormously greater proportions, and the relief of the force shut up in Ladysmith had become not so much a pressing necessity, but a demand *vocis populi*. Meantime, after the events in the south and west of the Free State, it was felt that a guiding hand was absolutely necessary to prevent both unnecessary loss of life and the condition of marking time, to which our columns had been reduced.

As to the second, there were but two generals in the army who had commanded first-class forces in such a way as to command the confidence of Thomas Atkins and his people at home. One of these was the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief at the Horse Guards, and as such, by principle and precedent, immovable, not to mention the fact that his health hardly admitted of his undertaking another campaign in addition to the longest and perhaps the most uniformly successful record ever made by a British general. The other was commanding in Ireland. His famous march from Cabul to Candahar was the best augury for an equally brilliant one from Bloemfontein to Pretoria, while the loss of his gallant son at Colenso added a tragic interest to his appointment, on the 18th December, as Field Marshal Commanding her Majesty's Forces in South Africa. The latter were to be immediately increased by three divisions and large contingents of Colonial mounted troops.

The third resolution, as regards the artillery, was the answer to Lord Wolseley's repeated demand to keep pace with the times in the matter of armament,

and to at once replace the guns lost on the 15th at Colenso.

The number of field batteries on the establishment of the army was raised rapidly, if gradually, from ninety-five to one hundred and forty-eight, all armed with the latest pattern Q.F. field-gun or howitzer. The re-armament of, first, the Militia Artillery and then of the Volunteers was resolved on, and orders for the necessary material at once given out.

From the personnel of position batteries or fortress companies, detachments for working one and a half inch and one pound shell machine-guns, similar to those owned by the Transvaal, and commonly known by their sound as 'pom-poms,' were at once formed; while in the Militia and Volunteers a reserve of field artillery, taken from heavy batteries and companies, commenced a three months' course of training at Aldershot or Okehampton.

Messrs. Vickers-Maxim and the Elswick Works were taxed to the uttermost, while completely new plant was laid down on a large scale in Woolwich Arsenal and the Small Arms Factory.

The Elswick battery, raised exclusively for the defence of the works, had the proud privilege of being the only Volunteer field battery sent to the front.

Waiting companies were formed to supplement the Volunteer service companies at the front, and each of the latter took a machine-gun and a detachment for the same, trained at Hythe before sailing.

A free hand was given to those Colonies that wished to send contingents, and from every quarter of the

globe large and small bodies of every race and nationality volunteered their services.

The following extracts from the *Daily Mail* of June 18th, 1900, will show better than anything else the magnitude of the task undertaken by Great Britain, and the thoroughness and success with which the work allotted to the staff at home has been carried out:—

'First of all we give the totals of men, horses, guns, and wagons sent from England since the despatch of the first detachment of the army corps on October 20th last.

Month.	No. of Ships.	Officers and Men.	Horses.	Guns.	Wagons and Carts.
1899.					
October . .	32	28,679	3680	76	360
November . .	38	29,178	5559	100	522
December . .	23	19,453	3275	61	335
1900.					
January . .	34	27,759	6023	117	448
February . .	39	33,604	5596	28	117
March . .	35	28,428	4397	23	137
April . . .	19	11,492	4340	2	32
May . . .	11	7,200	2623	2	0
June (first week) .	3	2,348	840	0	0
Total . .	234*	188,141	36,333	409	1951

* Many of the transports have, of course, made several journeys now.

'This table shows that in the 227 days since October 20th (including Sundays) 234 transports have left England for South Africa—roughly speaking, one per day—each carrying on an average about 800 troops and 150 horses, besides guns and vehicles.

'In addition to this great army, troops have been sent from Australia, Canada, India, and small contingents from other Colonies, and reliefs from Malta, Crete, Egypt, etc.—in all, a total of about 20,000, which makes the grand total of fighting men landed in South Africa well over 200,000.

'To the total of 36,000 horses sent from England must be added other 34,000 remounts from Australia, Argentina, and New Orleans, and about 10,000 which went with the Colonial contingents. Of mules, over 75,000 have been despatched from New Orleans, the Mediterranean, Indian, and other ports. Thus we arrive at a total of over 150,000 animals.

'The average cost of these horses and mules (*i.e.* of those bought abroad for remounts) is estimated at £15 and £12 apiece respectively. As to the cost of transporting the men from England to South Africa, no exact figures are obtainable, but it may be stated that one of the transports received £7000 for its charter, and 1s. 6d. per head per day for all the troops it carried. On this basis an approximate total sum may be easily arrived at—viz., about £14,000,000 sterling.

'These figures, striking as they are, by no means exhaust the statistics relating to the transport, for, besides the men, horses, mules, guns, and vehicles detailed above, there have been sent out 11 general

hospitals, 5 stationary, and 27 field hospitals, and 18 bearer companies, for the care of the wounded. These have been manned by 470 military and 360 civilian doctors and surgeons, 530 nurses, 3500 Royal Army Medical Corps, 500 Volunteers, 1200 St. John's Ambulance Corps, and 130 Militia ambulance corps, all of whom, not to mention the personnel of the several large private hospitals, have been carried from England. Two hospital trains and four hospital ships have been sent from England, and others have been made up at the Cape. The weight of a general hospital and equipment, it may be added, is 412 tons, and of a stationary hospital, 80 to 100 tons, so that the necessary ship space for this branch of the army's requirements is no small matter.

'With regard to shipments of ammunition, foods, and general munitions of war, the only figures available are those giving the tonnage engaged in various ships. From October 5th, 1899, to April 28th, 1900, 293,774 tons were engaged in 192 ships. This vast quantity of material was all sent out from England, and consignments are still going out day by day in the same proportion.

'To this amount we have to add 150,000 tons of oats, meat, hay, coal, etc., which have been despatched from various ports in the United Kingdom, the Colonies, and abroad.

'To deal with the postal and telegraphic work, 579 telegraphists and 3500 post-office men have been shipped to South Africa. The mails to that part of the world have, needless to say, been very largely increased, and on May 19th, for instance, 313,416

letters, weighing over 7000 lbs., and 131,508 newspaper packets were despatched to the army, representing 643 bags out of the total of 679 which made up the full mail to South Africa on that occasion.

'Finally, to complete the work of the transports, 536 officers and 10,807 non-commissioned officers and men have been brought back to England as invalids up to the end of May. Truly, in spite of the faults which were committed at the outset of the campaign, this is a work of which we may well be proud; there can be no doubt that it has done at least as much as our feats of arms in the field to uphold our prestige and exhibit our power to foreign rivals and critics.'

And, it may be asked, to whom, under the Field Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, was the Empire most indebted for the work indicated by the above figures? For the men, to Sir Evelyn Wood, Adjutant-General, and his staff; for the ordnance, to Sir Henry Brackenbury and those under him; for the horses, draft animals, and transport, to Sir Charles Mansfield Clarke, Quartermaster-General, and his staff; for the ordnance stores, made, contracted for, and sent out, to Major-General Steevens, Principal Ordnance Officer; for the mobilisation arrangements, in the first place to Colonel F. Stopford, and after he had gone out, to Colonel Percy Lake at the Horse Guards. But where every one has worked so hard it is almost invidious to mention names or select departments; at the same time the name of the Chief Disembarking Officer at Cape Town must not be omitted, as his unfailing energy and tact have largely conduced to the smoothness with which all arrangements at that end have been

conducted. This officer was Captain Sir Edward Chichester, R.N.

The actual cost of the campaign and the sums spent in South Africa have yet to be stated, and it may be interesting to consider how these sums can best be recovered.

CHAPTER IV

A sound of words that change to blows,
A sound of blows on armed breasts,
And individual interests
Becoming bands of Armed Foes.

Tennyson.

HAVING roughly sketched the events that led up to the South African War of 1899-1900, and having indicated the forces available, let us turn at once to the military history of the opening campaign, if I may be permitted to claim so great a title for so small a work.

In September the command of the forces in Natal was vested in General Symons, whose duty it was to make the best arrangements, with the five thousand men at his disposal, to resist any invasion by the Boers who were openly collecting beyond the frontier. A division was at this time leaving India for Durban to reinforce him. The line of the Tugela would have commended itself to many strategists had a large force been available to defend the hundred miles of its sinuous course, but that line would have left to the Boers the junction of the lines of railway from Pretoria and the Orange Free State at Ladysmith. Having only a small force, sufficient for one locality

but not for an extended front, and expecting to be shortly reinforced in great strength, General Symons determined wisely, in our opinion, to concentrate his forces and supplies at Ladysmith, there to hold the Boers in check should they advance by rail, or to cut their retreat should they move by road to attack Pietermaritzburg. He calculated that in three weeks after they should have crossed the frontier a division of his former comrades would be landed at Durban from India, and that all he had to do was to hold Ladysmith, and if possible Pietermaritzburg, till then.

Other considerations, however, weighed with the colonists of Natal and their Governor, Sir Walter Hely Hutchinson. They did not wish to see Northern Natal invaded and their farms and industries ruined, and they feared that a number of Africanders, of doubtful loyalty, and of the Dutch might side with the invaders, if they found their farms abandoned by the British. As a matter of fact, the number who did so was but small, and proved a great disappointment to the Boers. In particular, they wished to save Dundee and its collieries, and, under pressure from them, General Symons detached two battalions of infantry, a regiment of cavalry (18th Hussars), and two batteries R.F.A. to occupy Dundee as secretly as possible. This town is situated in a mountainous country seventy-six miles south-south-east of Newcastle and forty-eight miles north-east of Ladysmith, near Glencoe Junction, on the branch railway line.

The whole available force was too weak to hold the line from Ladysmith to Dundee, and the Boers could easily march round the east of Dundee on Pietermaritz-

burg, or endeavour to divide the scattered forces, and destroy them piecemeal.

This was actually the plan of their commandants, and was only spoilt by a want of cohesion in their forces, and of concert in the execution of their movements. Appointed to the supreme command in Natal before the Ultimatum, Sir George White landed in Durban on the 7th October, and made his headquarters at Pietermaritzburg. The troops under his command were arranged as follows during the second week in October 1899:—

At Pietermaritzburg, 1st Manchester Regiment and the Mounted Infantry Company, 2nd King's Royal Rifle Corps.

At Estcourt, the Natal Royal Rifles and a detachment Natal Naval Volunteers.

At Colenso, the Durban Light Infantry.

At Ladysmith, the 5th Lancers, several batteries R.F.A., the 10th Mountain Battery, some Garrison Artillery, the 23rd Field Company R.E., the 1st Devons, 1st Liverpools, a company of Mounted Infantry, two sections of No. 26 Field Hospital R.A.M.C., and some Colonial troops.

At Glencoe, for Dundee, the 18th Hussars, two batteries R.F.A., 1st Leicesters, 1st K.R.R.C., and a company of Mounted Infantry, 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers and their M.I. Company, with the 6th Field Hospital, Army Veterinary Department.

At Helpmakaar, a detachment Umvoti Mounted Rifles.

At Etshowe, one company 1st K.R.R.C.

The Free State forces, some ten thousand strong, were known to be west of Ladysmith in the Drakensberg passes, and twenty thousand of those of the South African Republic were concentrated at Zandspruit and other places within striking distance of Newcastle. Accordingly, on receipt of the Ultimatum, Sir George White interviewed the Governor on the 10th October at Pietermaritzburg, and, having failed to convince him that military necessities were superior to political exigencies, departed for Ladysmith, sending General Symons to Dundee.

On the 12th the Boers crossed the frontier, and next day occupied Charlestown; during the following week they moved in three columns southwards as follows:—

General Joubert occupied Newcastle and marched on Glencoe Junction. Generals Koch and Viljoen crossed the Botha pass and reached Elandslaagte on the 19th, with a view to cut the railway between Generals White and Symons; while Lucas Meyer at the same time was almost at Dundee from the east, having crossed the Buffalo from Vryheid. Sir George White at this time occupied Ladysmith with eight thousand men and twenty-four guns, General Symons had perhaps four thousand six hundred, with eighteen guns, at or near Dundee. Both covered their front with a cavalry screen, and for a few days the Boers seemed to hesitate. On the 17th, however, the Free State commandoes were in contact with the British between Bester's station, Blaauwbank, and Acton Homes; and the next day the Natal Carabineers were driven back from the first-named place, while the 18th Hussars

met a strong force at Hatting Spruit Station, eight miles north of Glencoe. The small force there was ordered back on the main camp at Craigside.

On the 19th Viljoen made a dash on Elandslaagte Station, captured a train full of provisions, and broke up the line.

The total Boer forces now in the field amounted to perhaps sixty thousand men and one hundred guns, and, had they not been delayed till the 11th, first, by the want of decision and preparation in the Free State, and secondly, by the lack of grass on the veldt for their horses, they should undoubtedly have swept Natal and the northern parts of Cape Colony clear of the British in September. In doing so they would have been joined by a large number of disaffected Africanders in these two colonies, especially in Cape Colony, and have become strongly posted and most difficult to attack or dislodge.

In other parts of their territory, on October 11th, the Boers had commandoes echeloned behind the frontier, threatening Mafeking, Vryburg, Kimberley, Hopetown, Colesberg, and Burghersdorp.

They crossed the frontier, cutting the railway south of Kimberley and north of Mafeking, to isolate those places. With this view they blew up, on the 12th, the Modder River railway bridge, and on the 13th that at Matoppo. On the 13th, Commandant Botha seized Border Station, fifty miles north of Kimberley, and another detachment cut the railway at Kraiapan, south of Mafeking, and captured there an armoured train under Captain Nesbit. They then occupied Taungs, Riverton, Vryburg, Klipdam, and Windsorton,

while on the 15th the investment of Mafeking and of Kimberley became effective.

The bombardment of the former place began on the 24th; that of the latter on November 7th.

Colonel Plumer, in Tuli, was held in check by one thousand Boers.

At this moment there were in Cape Colony only five battalions of British infantry, one company of fortress artillery, and one of fortress engineers. Local volunteer forces were being organised in haste, but the invasion could not be stopped.

A body of six thousand Free Staters was assembled at Donkerpourt Station, and early in November, encouraged by Joubert's success at Farquhar's Farm, on October 30th, they invaded the Cape Colony in three columns, seizing all the bridges across the Orange River. On the right two thousand men marched on De Aar Junction, one thousand men in the centre by Norval's Pont on Middelburg, by Colesberg and Naauwpoort; on the left three thousand men from Bethulie marched towards Queenstown and Port Elizabeth, while a general reserve of four thousand men assembled at Bethulie.

Sir Redvers Buller, who landed at Cape Town on the 31st October, telegraphed to order the one hundred and fifty of Rimington's Guides at Naauwpoort Junction to fall back on De Aar, and to the 66th Regiment (2nd Berkshires) and detachment of Marines at Stormberg to retire on Queenstown. These movements took place on 3rd and 4th November. Seizing Colesberg and Aliwal North without resistance, the Free Staters occupied Middelburg on the 15th November, Steyns-

burg on the 20th, and, finally, Stormberg on the 26th November. They then proclaimed the annexation of these districts.

At the same time they destroyed the railway between De Aar and Kimberley, and between Colesberg and Bethulie, and mined all the bridges on the Orange River.

In following general operations in South Africa I have found the French General Staff Map to be, in clearness and small compass, the most satisfactory companion to any account of the strategic operations undertaken by Sir Redvers Buller or Lord Roberts, but maps published by Philip and Son, Bacon, Messrs. Johnston and others, are more easily accessible, though less excellent specimens of cartography. The plans throughout this volume have been compiled from the various editions of the intelligence maps revised and corrected by MS. surveys, which have been kindly placed at my disposal for the purpose.

Returning to Natal, we find the Johannesburg commando two thousand strong, under Commandants Koch and Viljoen, astride of the railway at Elandslaagte on the 19th, and on the following day General Joubert had arranged, with overwhelming forces, to annihilate General Symons's little force of four thousand five hundred or four thousand six hundred men who, with their eighteen guns, were now cut off from their base at Ladysmith. He was still connected by telegraph, *via* Greytown, with Sir George White.

The Boer plan was to attack him from the east with seven thousand men, under Lucas Meyer, and from the north-west with seventeen thousand, under General

Joubert, on the 20th October. The latter column, however, failed to come up in time, and to this alone was due the survival of General Symons's force.

The latter were encamped at Craigside, between Dundee and Glencoe, and though covered by both cavalry and infantry outposts, were not expecting an immediate attack. Before day had fully dawned, at 3 A.M., the eastern pickets were driven in, and a shell from a heavy gun fell like a thunderbolt in the middle of the sleeping camp. It was then seen that Meyer had seized Talana Hill, a rugged height commanding the British camp from the north, and had placed his guns there. At the foot of the hill ran a donga, and, beyond this, below the steepest part was a narrow belt of wood not sufficiently thick to give cover from rifle fire from the ridge. Half-way up the slope, parallel to the ridge, was a stone wall under which, about 10 A.M., the three British regiments found a moment's shelter at six hundred yards from the summit. Their artillery had commenced the action at 5.30 A.M. by two hours of rapid firing, during which the Boer guns were silenced. The infantry then advanced, and, taking open order at the donga, had fought their way through the wood, not without loss under a heavy fire of Mausers, by which General Symons, who had been conspicuous from the red flag carried by his mounted orderly, fell, about 9.30 A.M., mortally wounded in the groin.

There was a thick mist, but the scouts reported that a force of about nine thousand men were advancing from the north to take the English in rear, but were yet an hour or more distant. This was pro-

bably only the point of General Joubert's advanced guard.

At 7.30 A.M., after a slight pause, the infantry advanced, availing themselves of whatever cover the wood and the buildings round Smith's Farm were able to give. The British artillery, which had been firing from its second position, now limbered up, galloped through Dundee, and opened fire at two thousand yards from the Boer lines with shrapnel, with good effect.

At 11.45 A.M. the final assault was delivered, and the 69th, followed by the 13th Battery R.F.A., advanced at a gallop to within eight hundred yards range. The ridge was actually carried at 1.30 P.M., and the 18th Hussars were sent in pursuit of the fleeing Boers, while one battery and the 1st Leicester Regiment were sent to the north to hold the column advancing by Hatting Spruit Station.

In the pursuit that ensued Lieutenant-Colonel Moeller and three squadrons of Hussars, some of the 60th Rifles and some Mounted Infantry, got separated from the infantry and were cut off by the Boers. Two squadrons managed to return to camp, but Lieutenant-Colonel Moeller and the rest were hemmed in by fifteen hundred Boers, forced to surrender, and sent to Pretoria, where they remained till Lord Roberts entered that capital. This, with the heavy losses of the British from fire and the pressure put on them by General Joubert's advancing column, went far to nullify the effects of a gallantly conducted action, but, as this was the first time the Boers had met the British since the disastrous defeats of Laing's Nek and Majuba Hill, the moral results were greatly in favour

of restoring the British prestige and reputation for valour among their opponents.

The 1st K.R.R.C. came in for the heaviest losses, losing twelve per cent. of seven hundred and fifty men engaged, including their commanding officer. The forces engaged would seem to have been about equal except in guns, of which Meyer had only five, of heavier calibre than the British field-gun. Lord Roberts's nephew, Colonel Sherston, D.S.O., was among the killed. The Boer losses are estimated at ten killed and sixty-six wounded, those of the British at forty-five killed, two hundred and twenty-nine wounded, and two hundred and fifty-nine captured, with one Maxim gun, during the pursuit.

The proportion of officers' casualties was very large, as will be seen from the subjoined table:—

	Officers.	Men.	Total.
KILLED.			
Staff,	2	0	2
18th Hussars,	0	1	1
69th Battery R.F.A.,	0	1	1
1st Leicestershire,	1	0	1
1st King's Royal Rifles,	5	13	18
1st Royal Irish Fusiliers,	2	14	16
2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers,	2	4	6
	12	33	45
WOUNDED.			
Staff,	3	0	3
18th Hussars,	3	8	11
13th Battery R.F.A.,	0	1	1
69th Battery R.F.A.,	0	2	2
1st Leicestershire,	1	0	1
1st King's Royal Rifles,	6	75	81
1st Royal Irish Fusiliers,	5	31	36
2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers,	3	44	47
Natal Police,	0	2	2
	21	163	184
Total casualties,	33	196	229

On the 19th and 20th the Free State patrols were constantly trying to divert Sir George White's attention from what was happening near Dundee, but on the latter date General French made a mounted reconnaissance towards Elandslaagte, supported by two battalions. The day was rainy and misty, but the sound of the guns at Talana Hill was clearly heard, and in the evening Sir George White was informed by wire of the defeat of the Boers. General Yule, who had succeeded General Symons in the command, had insufficient ammunition left for another battle, and was hard pressed by General Joubert. Consequently it was of the first importance to restore the communication by rail now broken at Elandslaagte, and at 4 A.M. on the 21st October General French started by road with the Imperial Light Horse, under Major Scott-Chisholm and the Natal Volunteer Artillery (six old 7-pounders), and was followed at 6 A.M. by an armoured train conveying four companies of the 1st Manchester Regiment as escort to the plate-laying and telegraph detachments R.E., for work at Elandslaagte junction. Arrived at Modder Spruit, about four and a half miles from their destination, they exchanged some shots with the Boer picket, and the Natal V.A. took post on a ridge commanding the station and coal-mines. At 8.30 A.M. they opened fire on the Boers on the opposite ridge running south from the station, and at once two Boer shells, directed by the German artillery officer, Colonel Shiel, at previously ascertained ranges, fell right into the battery, blowing up an ammunition wagon. The guns used were 14-pounder Q.F. breech-loaders, which had

been lost in the Jameson Raid. The British force had to retire out of range, and General French telegraphed for reinforcements, which arrived two hours later. The colliery manager, Mr. Harris, who escaped in the morning from the Boers, informed General French that their strength was about eight hundred Johannesburgers, two hundred Free Staters, and eighty trained artillerymen of the German legion, the whole under General Koch, who was accompanied by Judge Koch and the Boer Advocate-General.

Sir George White, on getting General French's telegram, left Sir Archibald Hunter in charge of Ladysmith with two battalions, a mountain battery, and five hundred Natal Volunteers, and sent off post haste the 5th Lancers and 21st and 42nd batteries R.F.A. to Elandslaagte. They were followed by Colonel Ian Hamilton with the other four companies of Manchesters, the 1st Devons, and five companies of the 2nd Gordons, proceeding by train.

In addition to these, Sir George White, the 5th Dragoon Guards, and Natal Carabineers also came out, but took no important part in the engagement.

At 2 P.M. General French re-took the offensive with three thousand five hundred men, sending five squadrons under Major Chisholm to his right, where they gained a ridge parallel to the Boers' main position. Meanwhile Major Gonne, with three squadrons, was sent to turn their right, and about 4 P.M. the R.F.A. advanced to a ridge some four thousand five hundred yards from the Boers' guns, which however did not reply to their fire. The 1st Manchesters had previously formed for attack on a front of five hundred

yards, followed by the 1st Devons and 2nd Gordons, but the former were moved to the left of the Manchesters, while the latter remained in support of their inner flanks.

As at Talana Hill the day before, it was a direct frontal attack, but in this case the Boer position was far stronger, though they were outnumbered by three to one.

The R.F.A. now advanced to three thousand two hundred yards range and again silenced the Boer guns for a time. Their gunners, however, constantly returned to their work, directing their fire on the advancing infantry.

The Devons, whose original formation was about one thousand three hundred yards deep, were now closing up, and all three regiments were losing men. When they were about one thousand yards from the Boer camp (which was in the nek between the two hills that formed their position), the latter were reinforced by a German commando, and their fire was intensified.

By rushes of fifty yards the British gained the ridge at its southern end. A heavy fire was poured on them from the higher summit to the north, and, along a ridge intersected in places by barbed-wire fences, the 92nd Regiment (2nd Gordons) made a charge which cleared out the Boers from the position. The 1st Devons, who had advanced straight on the front of the Boers, had opened fire at one thousand two hundred yards range, having no shelter except behind the ant-heaps. The three companies in front, under Lieutenant-Colonel Park, were extended over five hundred yards of front. At about seven hundred and fifty yards

from the ridge they obtained some shelter from the precipitous slope in front, and awaited the flanking movement on their right, which was being carried out by the Manchesters and Gordons.

From 5 P.M. these two regiments were established on the southernmost summit of the ridge, and were painfully making their way northwards over the boulder-strewn slopes. After a breathing-space of perhaps half an hour, as it was 6 P.M. and darkness commenced to fall, Colonel Ian Hamilton ordered the charge to be sounded. The bugles of the Gordons first sounded, then those of the Manchesters; also those of the Devons, far down the slopes in front, joined in and encouraged their comrades on the ridge.

As the leading company of the Devons reached the Boer battery the ridge was won, and from it the laager was seen crowded with men and horses with a large white flag flying in the centre. 'Cease fire' was ordered in consequence, and some of our troops descended towards the camp, when suddenly a murderous fire was opened on them, and a party of Boers, who had crept back to a small summit east of the ridge, charged down on it. This was the first instance of what became known as 'the white flag trick' in the war, and for a moment the victors were driven back; the next, however, saw the Boers driven off the field, pursued first by volleys, and then by the cavalry, while the camp and all its stores fell into the hands of the British.

The loss of the Boers was one hundred killed, one hundred and eight wounded, and one hundred and eighty-eight taken prisoners. General Koch died of his

wounds, and the Advocate-General was among the killed. Many notable Boers were wounded, including Judge Koch.

The English loss was fifty-five killed, and two hundred and seven wounded, detailed as follows :—

KILLED.	Officers.	Men.	Total.
5th Lancers,	0	1	1
Imperial Light Horse,	1	10	11
1st Manchester Regiment,	0	11	11
2nd Gordon Highlanders,	5	27	32
	6	49	55
WOUNDED.			
Staff,	1	0	1
5th Lancers,	0	2	2
Imperial Light Horse,	9	32	41
21st Battery R.F.A.,	2	3	5
42nd Battery R.F.A.,	0	3	3
1st Devonshire Regiment,	4	29	33
1st Manchester Regiment,	5	26	31
2nd Gordon Highlanders,	8	83	91
	29	178	207
Total casualties,			262

The percentage for officers was again very high, being 23·00. That for men was 7·5 only.

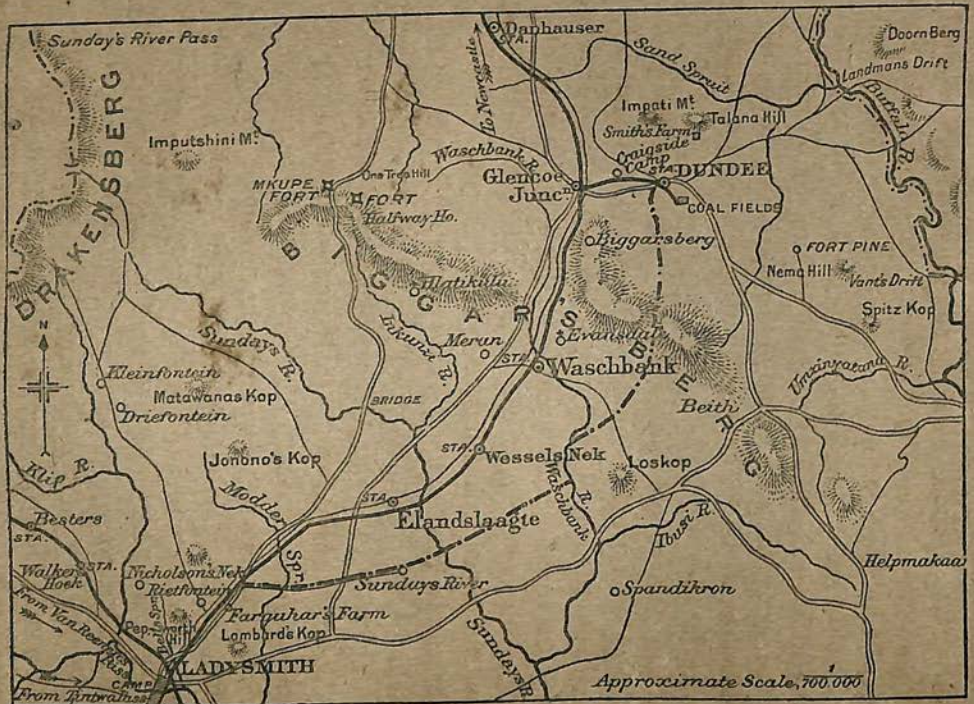
The day after the action of Talana Hill we find General Joubert pressing from the north with nine thousand men on General Symons's small force, while Lucas Meyer had retired towards Helpmakaar to be ready to strike again shortly. Heavy guns were posted on Mount Impati commanding the British camp, which was hastily abandoned on the afternoon of the 21st for another position farther south. Here, after two hours' march, without greatcoats, in pouring

rain, the hungry column found their regimental and ammunition-train; but no sooner had they begun to bivouack than the Boer shells began to find them out. A retreat on Dundee was at once ordered. On arrival there, the town was found in confusion, the inhabitants flying along the Helpmakaar road in every conveyance they could find. General Yule then left his baggage-train in Dundee, and facing the column about started for Glencoe as if to seek the enemy, but in reality uncertain as to his communications with Sir George White by the railway.

After the marches and counter-marches between Glencoe and Dundee on the 21st and 22nd October, when the news of Elandslaagte arrived, General Yule sent off a squadron of hussars and a battery of artillery by the Biggarsberg to cut off the retreat of the supposed fugitives from the battle.

This force soon encountered a strong Boer commando and had to retreat. A general retreat on Ladysmith was then decided on. The special correspondent of the *Reichswehr*, present with the troops, graphically described how General Yule fell back first on his camp, covered by cavalry and artillery, and only saved by the Boers not having shrapnel, while their common shell generally failed to burst.

Soaked to the skin and without a meal for thirty-six hours, the troops hoped for rest, but were ordered to march at once on the Dundee and Helpmakaar road, from which they suddenly bore to the right into the Biggarsberg concealed by their rear-guard, which was constantly in action, and by the profound darkness, heavy rain, and dense fog.


Sunday's River Pass
DRAKENSBERG
Imputshini Mt.
MKUPE FORT
FORT
One Tree Hill
Halfway Ho.
Danhauser
To Newcastle
Waschbank R.
Glencoe Junc.
Sand Spruit
Impati Mt.
Talana Hill
Smith's Farm
Craigside Camp
DUNDEE
COAL FIELDS
Doorn Berg
Landmans Drift
Buffalo R.
Biggarsberg
FORT PINE
Nema Hill
Vant's Drift
Spitz Kop
BIGGARSBERG
Matikulu
Inkwire R.
Merun
Evansdale
Waschbank
Umvyatana R.
Beith
Sundays R.
Kleinfontein
Matawanas Kop
Driefontein
BRIDGE
Klip R.
Jononos Kop
Modder Spr.
Wessels Nek
Loskop
Waschbank R.
Elandslaagte
Tugela R.
Helpmakaar
Besters
Walker Hoek
Nicholsons Nek
Rietfontein
Sundays River
Spandikron
From Van Reenens Pass
Farquhar's Farm
Lamberds Kop
LADYSMITH
From Pomeroy
Sundays R.
Approximate Scale, 1/100,000
Line of retreat of General Yule from Dundee.

Then first the troops realised that retreat, not advance, was the order of the day; this was continued on the line of the river Waschbank and Sunday's River to Ladysmith, a distance of at least fifty miles.

While General Yule was thus engaged on 23rd and 24th October, Sir George White, reckoning that he would reach Sunday's River on the 24th, and knowing that a strong force of Boers from Bester's Station occupied a position between Glencoe and Ladysmith near the railway, left at dawn on the 24th to attack them so as to cover General Yule's flank until such time as he should know for certain that his junction with the latter at Ladysmith was assured.

With four thousand five hundred men, including four battalions of infantry and three batteries, he attacked the Free Staters, estimated by the English at fifteen hundred, at Reitfontein. They occupied a hill to the north of the Modder Spruit called Mount Jonono, seven miles north of Ladysmith.

General French with the cavalry led the attack. General White, not finding himself able to turn the position, kept up a heavy fire for four hours, occupying the Boers and enabling General Yule to clear out of the Biggarsberg in safety. A turning movement by the Boers on his left on Mount Intintanyone was with some difficulty repulsed.

After six hours' engagement, four of which were occupied in bombarding the Boer position with two batteries R.F.A. (the 42nd and the 53rd), his object being attained, he withdrew his forces in succession on Ladysmith, covered by the 53rd Battery, 5th

Lancers, and 19th Hussars, having one hundred and eighteen killed and wounded, including the Colonel, seven officers, and sixty-eight men of the Gloucester Regiment alone.

The Boer losses amounted, according to English reports, to two hundred and thirty in all.

On the evening of the 25th, General Yule reached the supports sent by General White, but his forces were in a miserable plight, without stores or camp equipment, and having lost their train, their guns, three hundred stragglers, and many horses in the defile of the Biggarsberg or the ravines of the Waschbank. All the wounded in Dundee, including General Symons, had also been abandoned necessarily.

The entry of General Yule into Ladysmith, on the 26th October, closes the first act of the campaign.

The three actions noted above were reported in the English press as victories, but, although they might be considered tactically as successful, strategically between the 11th and 26th October Sir George White had lost ten per cent. of his available forces in undoing the error involved in the occupation of Dundee.

The *Broad Arrow* and one or two Service papers alone of the English press viewed the engagements fought in their proper light.

After the 21st the 1st Liverpool Regiment and the 2nd K.R.R.C. arrived, and on the 30th October the 2nd Rifle Brigade reached Ladysmith direct by rail from Durban. The 1st Border Regiment was also expected, but did not get up in time.

Sir George White had at Ladysmith on the 30th October not more than ten thousand effective troops,

including the most recent reinforcements from Pietermaritzburg. General Joubert had about nineteen thousand men on part of a circle of ten miles radius.

General White kept himself informed by his captive balloon and constant cavalry patrols, and on the 28th sent his wounded and impedimenta to Pietermaritzburg by train.

In the meantime the Boers, having occupied Dundee on the 23rd and closely pursued General Yule's rearguard through the passes, where they were joined by Lucas Meyer from Beith, effected a junction north of Ladysmith between the Free Staters from the west and General Joubert's column from the north. They strongly occupied the mountainous country round Pepworth Hill, which commands Ladysmith[1] at seven thousand yards range, and commenced bringing up siege-guns by rail from Pretoria. On the 28th they also sent a detachment towards Pieters Station, as if to cut the railway line to Durban, and were announced to be intrenching themselves in considerable force beyond the Modder Spruit on the scene of the action of Reitfontein. Sir George White accordingly occupied the Lombard's Kop position with two squadrons, four field and one mountain batteries, five battalions of infantry, the Natal Volunteers, and the mounted infantry of the Liverpool Regiment. A squadron of the 18th Hussars reconnoitred beyond the Modder Spruit, but the action did not become more than an exchange of shots between outposts.

On the 29th he reconnoitred five miles past a force of Boers near Farquhar's Farm, and on the 30th he

[1] For Map of Ladysmith, see page 229.

attacked them, sending Colonel Carleton and eleven hundred men after dark on the 29th to cover his left flank by occupying Nicholson's Nek, while he with the main body attacked General Joubert. This he did in two columns, under Colonels Grimwood and Hamilton, while General French and the cavalry covered his right flank.

The force under Colonel Carleton consisted of four and a half companies of the Gloucesters and six companies 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers with the 10th Mountain Battery and two hundred and eight mules, and was under the guidance of Major W. Adye of the Staff.

It was not supposed that the Free Staters were in force in this direction, and no means appear to have been taken to keep touch between the main body at Ladysmith and this small column, which started off in the darkness to march six miles north up Bell's Spruit into the hills. They had their orders and marched to carry them out regardless of what they might meet. All that followed happened without any communication from or to Sir George White. The Boers, however, well informed as usual, shadowed their movements and assembled a superior force, cutting off their retreat.

At 1 A.M. Colonel Carleton had arrived at a defile within two miles of Nicholson's Nek, when two rolling boulders stampeded his battery mules. The other mules scattered in the darkness, frightened by a Boer piquet which galloped through them. By this means the ammunition-train was lost and the men left with only the rounds they had on their persons.

The column then seized and fortified the nearest height, the end of a ridge, two companies of Gloucesters holding the highest point on the south.

The Free Staters attacked at dawn, and more seriously at 9 A.M. By 1 P.M. the ammunition was exhausted, and the English fire ceased.

By 2 P.M. they had to surrender, and by 3 P.M. all had laid down their arms.

The exact history of this is variously given.

The losses were six officers wounded; fifty-two men were killed; twenty-nine officers and eight hundred and ninety-eight men laid down their arms, while one hundred and fifty managed to escape to Ladysmith, and eighty-six more wounded were sent in under a flag of truce to the English hospitals for treatment.

Of the four guns lost two had been rendered useless to the enemy.

To return to the main body, the centre under Colonel Ian Hamilton consisted of the 1st Devons, 2nd Gordons, and 1st Manchesters. This force with three batteries R.F.A. took post facing Pepworth Hill during the night, while the right under Colonel Grimwood, consisting of the 1st and 2nd K.R.R.C., 1st Leicesters, 1st Liverpools, and 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers with four batteries R.F.A., faced east in front of Helpmakaar and Cemetery Hills. The Imperial Light Horse and part of the 5th Lancers filled the angle facing Farquhar's Farm, while General French with the rest of the cavalry and Mounted Infantry formed a right flank guard corresponding to Colonel Carleton's column on the extreme left. We must add

to these the 2nd Rifle Brigade, which only detrained at 4.30 A.M. from Durban and marched straight to the sound of the guns.

At daybreak on the 30th the Boers opened fire, and the British artillery immediately replied wherever the enemy's guns could be located. The artillery duel lasted till noon, and the Boer gunners frequently when the fire was hottest left their guns, sought shelter, and as soon as the fire lessened returned to them again and recommenced firing.

Under cover of the artillery the English, at 8 A.M., reached a ridge five miles north of Ladysmith already evacuated by the Boers, who now occupied a half circle about eight miles long, from the Helpmakaar road, on the north-east of Ladysmith.

The Boers then attacked Colonel Grimwood, who was covered on the right by General French's Cavalry Brigade, mostly firing dismounted. Sir George White had to support Grimwood with three battalions and the fire of his artillery except two batteries.

About 9 A.M. the right fell back on the guns, losing heavily. They were gallantly covered by the 53rd Battery, which retired with the loss of many horses. The cavalry also retired. Thenceforth the battle was lost, and about 11 A.M. the general retreat on Ladysmith commenced. The Imperial Light Horse behaved extremely well.

The arrival of the Naval Brigade of two hundred and eighty men with two 4·7-inch guns and four long naval 12-pounders, Q.F., mounted on Captain Percy Scott's travelling carriage, which he had put together at Durban on the spur of the moment, alone saved

Sir George White's force from heavy loss in their retreat. The Boers might at that critical moment, with their overwhelming numbers, have swarmed into Ladysmith after the retreating British through the hasty defences, which in most cases were hardly begun, but they contented themselves with firing at the retreating columns from the ridges they occupied; nevertheless, they had already the superiority in artillery, both in range and weight of metal, and not even the extraordinary gallantry of our gunners in covering the retreat could prevent the Boer 40-pounders and their 1 lb. shell machine-guns from inflicting severe loss. When at noon the blue-jackets opened fire with two of their 15-pounders with lyddite shells on the Boer 40-pounder, things speedily changed; in eight rounds the big gun was silenced and its lesser companions suffered in like manner.

By 2 P.M. the whole force, which had marched out with every intention of remaining out three or four days and dispersing the unknown forces assembling around it, was again in Ladysmith seeking only shelter from the enemy's fire and the completion of preparations to stand what might be a short or a long siege, according as the Boers at once pressed their advantage or remained inactive. The railway line remained open three days longer, but the four thousand five hundred civil inhabitants were not sent to a place of safety, nor were measures taken, now that the offensive was definitely abandoned, to place the cavalry brigade in a position where it might remain of use.

All hands were, however, fully occupied in making arrangements for the defence and getting the naval

guns into positions where they might be of service proportionate to their powers.

The following is an analysis of the British losses in this the first really important action in the war:—

UNIT.	OFFICERS.			MEN.		
	Killed.	Wounded.	Missing.	Killed.	Wounded.	Missing.
5th Dragoon Guards,	0	0	0	0	3	0
18th Hussars,	0	0	0	0	1	0
19th Hussars,	0	0	0	2	5	0
13th Field Battery,	0	1	0	1	8	0
21st Field Battery,	0	0	0	1	1	0
42nd Field Battery,	1	0	0	2	5	0
53rd Field Battery,	0	0	0	0	6	0
67th Field Battery,	0	0	0	0	0	1
69th Field Battery,	0	1	0	0	0	6
L. Battery R.H.A.,	0	0	0	0	0	1
1st K. R. Rifles,	0	0	0	1	32	21
2nd K. R. Rifles,	3	2	0	8	29	16
1st Leicester,	0	0	0	2	18	4
2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers,	0	0	0	0	3	0
1st Manchester,	0	0	0	0	6	1
1st Royal Irish Fusiliers,	0	3	13	10	41	313[1]
1st Gloucestershire,	0	3	19	30	53	330
10th Mountain Battery,	0	0	5	0	1	84
Telegraph Section, R.E.,	0	0	0	0	1	0
Royal Navy,	0	0	0	0	3	0
Natal Mounted Rifles,	1	0	0	0	2	0
Border Mounted Rifles,	0	0	0	0	2	0
South African Police,	0	0	0	0	1	0
Royal Army Medical Corps,	1	0	0	0	0	0
Staff,	0	0	1	9	0	0
	6	10	38	57	221	977
Total,	1309					

[1] About one hundred and fifty of these escaped from Boers and returned to Ladysmith.

The following extract from Sir George White's despatch at the time will be read with interest, and maintains the best traditions of a British general:—

'*From the General Officer Commanding, Natal, to the Secretary for War.*

'(Received Oct. 31, 4.47 A.M.)

'LADYSMITH, *Oct.* 30, 11.35 P.M.

'I have to report a disaster to a column sent by me to take a position on hill to guard the left flank of the troops in these operations to-day.

'The Royal Irish Fusiliers, No. 10 Mountain Battery, and the Gloucestershire Regiment were surrounded in the hills, and after losing heavily had to capitulate.

'Casualties not yet ascertained.

'A man of Royal Irish Fusiliers, employed as hospital orderly, came in under flag of truce with a letter from the survivors (?) of the column, and asked for assistance to bury the dead.

'I fear there is no doubt of the truth of the report.

'I formed the plan in carrying out which the disaster occurred, and am alone responsible for that plan.

'No blame whatever attaches to the troops, as the position was untenable.'

At a later date he thus describes the disaster:—

'At this point two boulders rolled from the hill and a few rifle-shots stampeded the infantry ammunition mules. The stampede spread to the battery mules, which broke loose from their leaders, and got away with practically the whole of the gun equipment. The

greater portion of the regimental small-arm ammunition reserve was similarly lost. The infantry battalions, however, fixed bayonets, and accompanied by the personnel of the battery seized a hill on the left of the road, two miles from the Nek, with but little opposition. There they remained unmolested until dawn, the time being occupied in organised defence of the hill, and constructing stone sangars and walls as cover from fire. At dawn a skirmishing attack on our position was commenced by the enemy, but made no way until 9.30 A.M., when strong reinforcements enabled them to push attack with great energy. The fire became very searching, and two companies of the Gloucesters in an advanced position were ordered to fall back. The enemy then pressed to short range, the losses on our side becoming very numerous. At 3 P.M. our ammunition was practically exhausted. The position was captured, and survivors of column fell into the enemy's hands. The enemy treated our wounded with great humanity, General Joubert at once despatching a letter to me offering safe-conduct to doctors and ambulance to remove wounded. Medical officer and parties to render first aid to wounded were despatched to scene of action from Ladysmith last night, and ambulance at dawn this morning. The want of success of the column was due to the misfortune of the mules stampeding, and consequent loss of guns and small arm ammunition reserve.'

At this moment there were in Natal, outside Ladysmith, only some two thousand five hundred Colonial

Volunteers, the Borderers and 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers, and such naval forces as could be landed at Durban.

The diamond-fields were guarded only by volunteers, half a battalion of the Loyal North Lancashires under Lieutenant-Colonel Kekewich, and some garrison gunners with 7-lb. muzzle-loaders. At Mafeking Colonel Baden-Powell was occupied in raising a force from the police and the colonists, while at Bulawayo Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer was similarly employed.

The Boers with sixty thousand men already in the field, all mounted and independent of transport, seemed to have every prospect of planting the *Vierkleur* in Pietermaritzburg, Durban, Mafeking, Kimberley, and even in the northern parts of Cape Colony, perhaps as far as Port Elizabeth and East London.

The sieges of Ladysmith, Kimberley, and Mafeking will be dealt with in separate chapters, and it will be seen how far their gallant defence aided in stopping the tide of invasion until Lord Roberts was able to roll it back upon itself to Bloemfontein, Kroonstadt, and Pretoria.

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST ARMY CORPS—SIR REDVERS BULLER—LORD METHUEN'S COLUMN—BATTLE OF MODDER RIVER

In the first week in October the English Government decided to mobilise the First Army Corps, and the Reservists rejoined about the 17th October. The first units disembarked in Natal or Cape Colony on the 10th November, and the whole, except some squadrons and one or two batteries, were landed by the 30th November. The account of this mobilisation will have been read in the chapter on the army.

Some units, including the 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Rifles, landed at East London; the rest either at Cape Town or at Durban. The journey occupied on the average twenty days. The damage done by storm to the horses on the *Wartha*, the *Rapidan*, and the *Persia*, together with the wreck of the *Ismore* and the loss of three hundred and thirty horses, the guns of the 63rd Battery R.A., and its stores, were the only mishaps of note.

Three things were urgent—the relief of Ladysmith, of Mafeking, and then that of Kimberley, and to stop the invasion of Cape Colony. Instead, therefore, of disembarking his whole force in Cape Colony, Sir

Redvers Buller now sent half of it to Durban, and formed three columns:—the right, under Sir F. Clery at Durban, to march by Pietermaritzburg and relieve Ladysmith; the centre, under Sir W. Gatacre, assembling at Queenstown, to arrest the invasion of Cape Colony, and ultimately to march on Bloemfontein; the left, under Lord Methuen, assembled at De Aar Junction, and advanced on the Orange River towards Kimberley.

Lastly, General French was to command a cavalry division operating from Naauwpoort, between Lord Methuen and Sir W. Gatacre.

The plan appeared to be as follows:—After freeing Kimberley and seizing Bloemfontein, Lord Methuen and Sir W. Gatacre were to join forces at Winburg, thirty-five miles north-east of Bloemfontein, and, leaving sufficient garrisons in their rear, to advance on Johannesburg and Pretoria, while a flanking column on their right was to guard them from General Joubert.

The *Militär Wochenblatt* blamed Sir Redvers Buller for dividing his forces, and remarked that the columns so distant from each other ran a risk of being beaten separately. This prophecy, we shall see, came true. The same paper also criticised the splitting up of the Army Corps, so that we find Lord Methuen's 2nd Brigade, Sir W. Gatacre's 6th Brigade, and his own 4th Brigade assembled under Sir F. Clery in Natal.

Lord Methuen at De Aar commanded the 1st, 3rd, and 9th Brigades, the latter formed in Natal, while Sir W. Gatacre at Queenstown had only his 5th

Brigade, and, perhaps, some other battalions who were stationed in Cape Colony previously.

The three columns were, therefore, formed of heterogeneous materials which were not accustomed to work together.

The special correspondent of the *Militär Wochenblatt* wrote on November 22nd, with reference to the above conception of Sir Redvers Buller's plan of campaign, that the Boers being mounted, and having the use of the railways in the interior, could bring a force quickly from Natal by Harrismith, and attack the right flank of the English column at Winburg. He remarks that the English officers have no experience of fighting with an accomplished enemy like the Boer, while the superiority of the Mauser of 1893-1895 to the Lee-Metford is now admitted. The Boer himself, as well as his horse, is acclimatised, and capable of greater fatigue than his adversary, most of the horses being also 'salted' against the horse sickness so prevalent at this season.

These and similar considerations occupied the mind of Sir Redvers Buller on the *Dunottar Castle* and after his arrival at the Cape on the 30th October. The organisation of his large staff and special service officers, as well as the preparation and despatch of men and materials as they reached South Africa, made his time in the capital a busy one. From Mafeking he heard that Colonel Baden-Powell was holding his own, while Colonel Plumer was organising a relief force at Bulawayo, and engaging the Boers south of Tuli at Rhodes Drift.

On the 7th November Piet Cronje (son of the com-

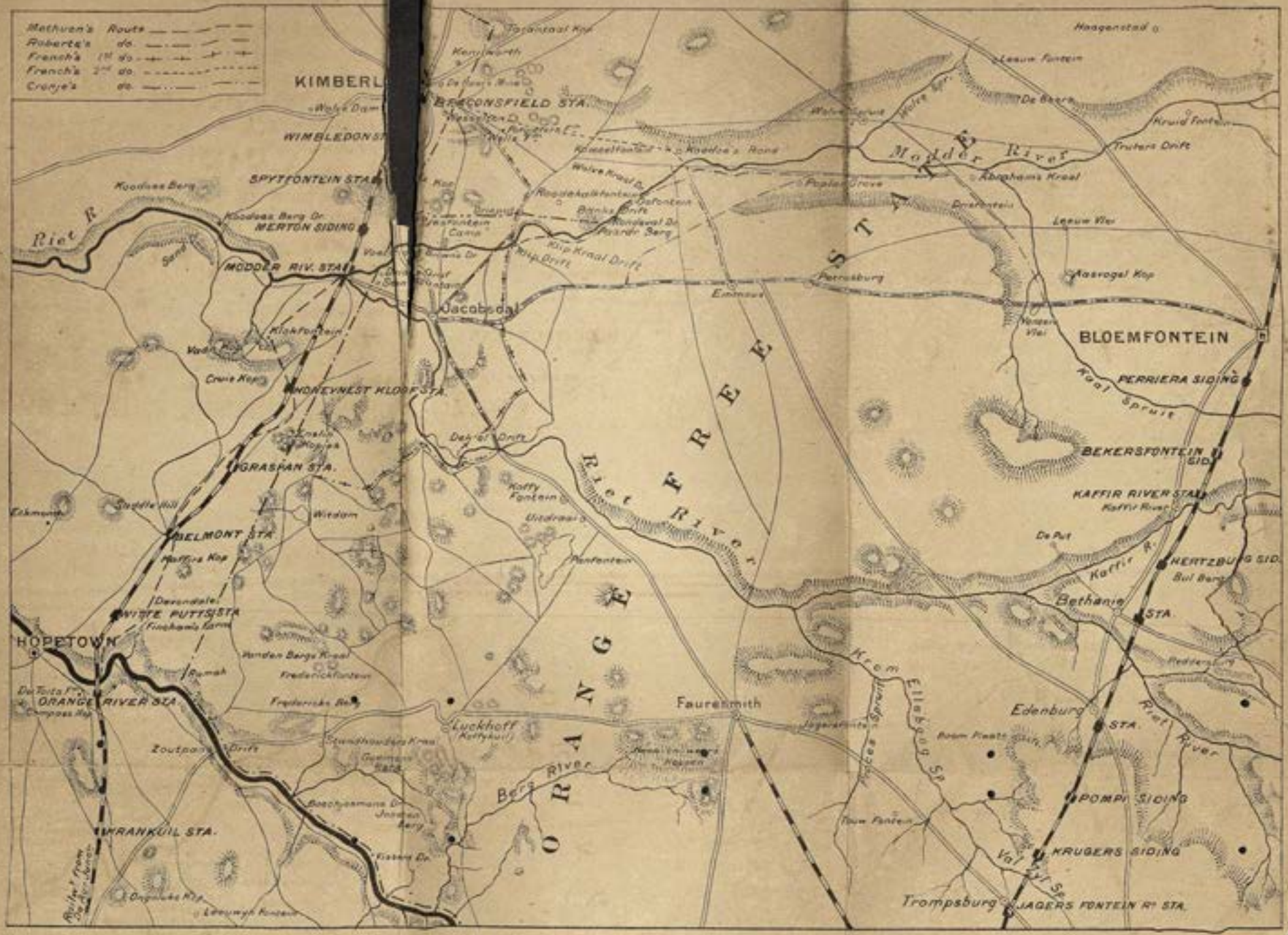
mandant) attacked Mafeking in strength, but his force was repulsed with heavy loss, and he himself was killed.

On the 10th, just as the First Army Corps began to disembark at Cape Town, the mounted force at Orange River Station made a reconnaissance, and encountered some seven hundred Boers near Belmont, on a crescent of hills, from which Colonel Gough found he was unable to dislodge them. After attempting to turn their left flank with his mounted infantry, he retired with a loss of two officers killed, two wounded, and two men wounded. This expedition partook too much of the nature of a picnic, and the loss of Lieutenant-Colonel Keith-Falconer, who had accompanied it as a spectator, was greatly regretted.

To watch and guard the railway system from Cape Town by De Aar and Naauwpoort to Port Elizabeth required no less than ten thousand and eighty men, of whom a proportion were natives and local volunteers.

Twelve men were posted to every mile of line. Nine trains daily conveyed the troops from Cape Town to the base at the Orange River, where Lord Methuen arrived on November 12th. A week later he had from eight thousand to nine thousand men, comprising the Brigade of Guards (Colville), the 9th Brigade (Featherstonhaugh), the 9th Lancers, a small number of mounted infantry, two batteries R.F.A., a detachment of Marines with four guns, and one company R.E.

Lord Methuen at once prepared to advance without waiting for the rest of his force. Captain Stewart,


Methuen's Route
Roberts's do.
French's 1st do.
French's 2nd do.
Cronje's do.
KIMBERLEY
BEACONSFIELD STA.
WIMBLEDON ST.
SPYTFONTEIN STA.
MERTON SIDING
MODDER RIV. STA.
Riet R.
Modder River
Jacobsdal
Klokfontein
HONEYNEST KLOOF STA.
GRASPAN STA.
MODDER RIVER STATION
Petrusburg
BLOEMFONTEIN
PERRIERA SIDING
BEKERSFONTEIN SID.
KAFFIR RIVER STATION
HERTZBURG SID.
Bethanie STA.
Riet River
Kaffir R.
Kaffir River
Koffy Fontein
Luckhoff
Fauresmith
ORANGE FREE STATE
Kroom Ellesberg Spruit
Edenburg STA.
POMPI SIDING
KRUGERS SIDING
Trompsburg
JAGERS FONTEIN Rd STA.
BELMONT STA.
WITTE PUTTS STA.
HOPETOWN
ORANGE RIVER STA.
FRANKUIL STA.
Zoutpan's Drift
Berg River
Scale of Miles
Scale of Yards

R.E., repaired the bridge as well as the railway, and when, at 4 A.M. on the 21st, Methuen's column were ready to start for Kimberley, only sixty miles distant, they were in high spirits.

Twenty days later they had learned the proverb, 'There is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip.'

The column, including the Naval Brigade, numbered about seven thousand five hundred men and twelve guns; but, being deficient in transport, each man carried only his own kit, rifle, and ammunition. A generally flat country, dotted with little kopjes, lies between Orange River and Belmont Station, with Kaffir's Kop three miles south-east of the latter place. On the night of the 21st they bivouacked on Finchman's farm, near Witteputs, to the west of the railway line.

Next day they marched after dinner, about 4 P.M., and bivouacked at sunset at Devondale, five miles south-west, and at Thomas's farm, five miles west of Kaffirs' Kop, where the Boers were awaiting them in position. Intending to surprise them, Methuen marched off in silence at two o'clock the following morning, and found he was half an hour too late, as the troops were still one thousand yards from the enemy at dawn (4.45 A.M.). Reaching the railway, the Northumberland Fusiliers formed the left wing, the Northamptons and Yorkshire Light Infantry the centre, and the four battalions of Guards the right, the whole in line of half battalions, each of which was in double-company quarter column. The latter were intended to turn the Boer left.

The Boers, duly informed of this, waited without

opening fire till the English, who began to doubt their presence, had crossed the railway and arrived within two hundred and fifty yards of the first line of kopjes. A signal shell was followed by musketry fire from the whole line.

The Boers had constructed dry-stone breastworks, called *schantzes*, and in rear of them, at intervals, were shelter-pits or trenches about fifteen feet long, in which, before retiring, they first buried their dead, and thus concealed their losses.

After this had lasted half an hour the twelve R.A. guns in the centre engaged and silenced the two Boer guns, and the infantry fire recommenced. Meantime the Naval Brigade guns fired at a lunette opposite the English centre at a range of one thousand eight hundred yards.

The 9th Brigade drove the enemy from their first line almost without firing a shot at them, as they could see nothing to fire at.

A German, fighting with the Boer centre, writes to the *Berliner Tageblatt*: 'The Mauser cartridges enveloped our position in smoke, while the cordite used by the English gave off only transparent gases; this enabled us to pick off each man aimed at. Twice they charged with the bayonet and were repulsed with loss; the third time they found the hill evacuated.' The Boers had mounted their horses and galloped to their second position.

As soon as the Guards, who were unable to outflank the Boers, reached the rocky slopes of the kopjes they had to cease fire and clamber up as best they could. The Boers opened fire from their second

position the moment the English entered their first. The Guards advanced slowly under a deadly fire, and the Boers only retired (at the gallop) to their third position, when their retreat was threatened by the Lancers and mounted infantry working round their flanks. The best mounted Boers remained firing to cover the retirement each time.

The third position was well shelled with shrapnel before the Yorkshire Light Infantry and the Fighting Fifth advanced across the open. The slopes were again very steep.

The Guards, who had up to this been firing independently, commenced volley firing, and sent a company of mounted infantry to make a flank attack, working up an empty trench. This being perceived, the trench was enfiladed by thirty Boers, and the officer killed, the company being annihilated.

At 8 A.M. the firing slackened, and the Boers retired northwards. Fatigue and the fear of ambuscades prevented pursuit by the Lancers. One group of mounted infantry under Major Milton, of the Yorkshire Light Infantry, fell into an ambush, and with difficulty extricated itself.

The Boers had retired on another position fifteen miles north-east of Orange River Station, and by 1 P.M. all firing had ceased. The Boer camp was seized, but according to the correspondent of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, the English found only burning wagons, and all stores destroyed except the draught oxen. There remained, however, a considerable quantity of the Boers' personal luggage.

The English losses were as follows:—

	Officers.		Rank and File.	
	Killed.	Wounded.	Killed.	Wounded.
Staff,	0	1 Maj.-Gen.	0	0
9th Lancers,	0	0	0	1
South African Horse,	0	0	1	3
3rd Grenadiers,	2	7	24	95
1st Coldstreams,	0	1	7	20
2nd Coldstreams,	0	2	3	3
1st Scots Guards,	0	3	13	32
1st Northumberland Fusiliers,	2	4	10	35
2nd Yorkshire L.I.,	0	0	0	5
2nd Northamptons,	0	3	0	14
18th Battery R.A.,	0	1	0	0
Total,	4	22	51	209

The Boers admit losing twelve killed, forty wounded, and some prisoners; but the English took forty prisoners, and estimate the killed and wounded at one hundred and forty.

The English officers had already been ordered to remove their badges of rank and to dress like the men, although not yet carrying rifles. All badges of non-commissioned rank were suppressed. A wounded Boer stated that twenty picked shots in each section were told off to pick off the officers and N.C. officers, but could not detect them.

Both sides conducted themselves most bravely.

A hospital train reached Belmont from Cape Town on the evening of the battle, and took the wounded to the hospital at the Orange River. They had all reached the field hospital by 1 P.M.

Lord Methuen was now within five days' march of Kimberley.

The very next day, November 24th, Lord Methuen

moved forward early in the morning with about eight thousand men, having been reinforced by half the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment (47th) and a detachment of Marines. The march to Graspan (about twelve miles) was accomplished without incident, and the men, having rested during the day, slept at their bivouac during the early part of the night.

At 3 A.M., preceded by an armoured train, with some of the Yorkshire Light Infantry, they advanced on Enslin, six miles further north-east. After advancing four miles the column deployed, with the Marines and the 5th Regiment in the first line, the Yorkshire Light Infantry and the Northamptons in reserve, and the brigade of Guards to the right rear. These last were attacked by five hundred Boers hidden on some high ground to their right, but easily repulsed them. At the same time the armoured train and the firing-line halted under a smart artillery fire about 6 A.M., the men lying down at once.

The Boers, reinforced from their forces round Kimberley, numbered about two thousand five hundred men, with six guns, one Maxim, and one Nordenfelt. They occupied a range of five hills, from east to west, strongly entrenched, and about one hundred and thirty-five feet high.

Their western or right flank lay on the railroad, and their left on a higher hill (one hundred and eighty feet) on the boundary of the Free State. Their six guns were in the centre, the two machine-guns at their flanks, and all ranges had been carefully measured beforehand, and marked out with whitewash on the

ant-heaps. Lord Methuen put his twelve field-guns in the centre, and the Marine gunners on his left. The Guards remained in rear with the convoy, and took no part in the action.

After an artillery duel from 6 to 9 A.M., Lord Methuen ordered a general attack on the Boers' left and the commanding kop. For half an hour a battery fired on this hill, and then the infantry advanced in skirmishing order, the Marines leading by their centre, on which unconsciously they kept closing, until, in the open plain at one hundred and fifty yards from the kop, they were in close order under a terrible fire. Their officers, distinguished by their swords, were the first to fall. At fifty yards from the kop Commander Ethelston, leading his men, fell mortally wounded. Many men were wounded three times, and the Boer fire grew more intense in spite of that of the English gunners, who were reinforced about this time. The best account of the battle is that of the *Times* correspondent.

The Yorkshire Light Infantry then advanced, passing through the 5th Fusiliers who were lying in extended order about a mile from the Boers, and gradually gained the crest, the English sending shell after shell into the Boer trenches. These were constructed at the top of a steep slope, so that their defenders had to expose their persons to fire down it, and, even then, there was a portion of dead ground, at the foot, of which the English took full advantage.

The fire was so severe that E Company of the Yorkshire L.I. was finally left in the command of the senior corporal. The Boers took up another position six

hundred and fifty yards further back, with a strong outpost flanking the English line of advance from the west.

Lord Methuen, hearing that a commando of three thousand men was at Honey's Nest Kloof, thirteen miles further north, stopped the action at 10 A.M.

The 9th Lancers essayed to pursue the Boers, but getting separated from the main body, did not return till much later, causing some anxiety. About 8 A.M., also, they had advanced with Rimington's Horse to a hill about two thousand seven hundred yards from our guns without previous reconnaissance, and came under a sharp fire at two hundred and sixty yards range from the Boers concealed on the kop.

This lack of proper scouting is a noticeable feature throughout the whole of the war up to the retirement from Coles Kop in February 1900.

The English losses were as follows:—

Regiment.	Killed.		Wounded.	
	Officers.	Men.	Officers.	Men.
9th Lancers, . . .	0	1	0	8
75th Battery R.F.A., .	0	0	0	1
1st Northumberland Fus.,	0	0	0	3
2nd Yorkshire L.I., .	0	8 (and 5 missing)	3	37
1st Loyal N. Lancashire,	0	1	0	19
2nd Northamptons, .	0	1 (and 1 missing)	0	4
R.N., ...	2	2	0	13
R.M.A., ...	0	1	0	25
R.M.L.I., . . .	4	7	0	49

Grand total, nine officers and one hundred and eighty-six rank and file. According to English newspaper accounts the Boers lost four hundred; this is no doubt in excess of the truth.

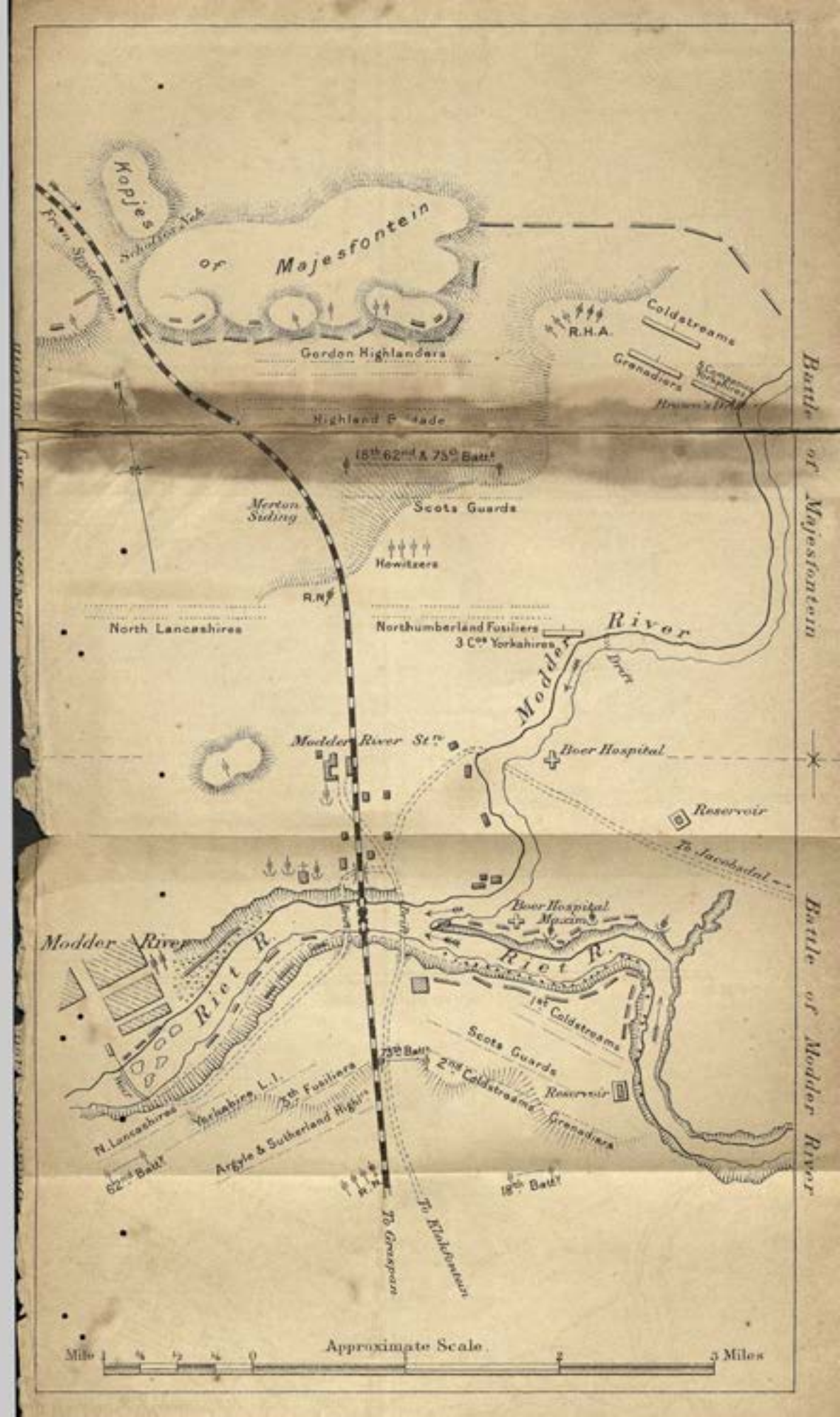
Considering this engagement as a whole, it would seem that if the Boer position had been on a plain or gentle slope, with an uninterrupted field of fire of, say, six hundred and fifty yards, the result would have been different, as the position could not have been taken.

On the 26th Lord Methuen rested his infantry while the cavalry made reconnaissances, with the loss of one officer and one trooper.

Next day the column marched before breakfast as far as the farm of Klokfontein, and a place called Witte Kop, where there was abundant water, six miles only from Modder River. On the march each battalion was followed by a water-cart behind its ammunition-wagon. Scouts reported no enemy as far as Modder River, but that the Boers were concentrated at Spytfontein.

Just above the railway bridge the Modder River joins the river Riet from the north, and the banks of both rivers were reconnoitred on the 27th by Lord Methuen himself, accompanied by one or two officers of his staff. They rode to within a few hundred yards of the south bank of the Riet, and could find no sign of an enemy, never suspecting his line of trench between them and the river. It was in orders that night that a breakfast of cooked steaks would be served the next morning at 7 A.M., and the troops turned in at 8.30 P.M. much looking forward to it. Lord Methuen intended them to breakfast in Modder River village and they were roused at 3 A.M. on the 28th and fell in in mass of quarter column.

They advanced at 4 A.M., the 2nd Northamptons



Battle of Majesfontein

Battle of Modder River

forming the advanced guard, and the Yorkshire L.I. the head of the main body; about 5 A.M. they halted, and the battalions advanced in extended order in succession, each commencing to deploy as the one in front marched off. The force amounted to just under eight thousand men when they started, with sixteen guns.

The Boers had been reinforced, and numbered also eight thousand men, with ten guns, under Delarey and Cronje, the guns being commanded by Albrecht. Unknown to Lord Methuen they had entrenched both banks of the Riet River, and occupied strongly the village of Modder River on the north bank, west of the railway, to resist his crossing.

Their entrenchments formed a crescent facing south, its left flank resting on an earth-work at a farm beyond the Free State boundary, and its right on some buildings to the north of the dam on the river Riet. They had destroyed the railway bridge, but the river is fordable at several points, and between the dam and the bridge is an island covered with poplars and acacias, and occupied defensively by the Boers. The right bank of the Riet slopes up gently to the north, and commands the bare plain on the south side for a great distance.

Both banks are fringed with trees and thick bushes.

The main Boer position and all their guns were on the north bank, but the advanced line was on the south bank. The trenches were revetted with sandbags and sheet tin or zinc, and protected by wire entanglements on the south.

The south bank dipped sharply behind the trenches

to the water level, forming a covered way for horses, ammunition, and reinforcements on both sides of the stream, while a great number of rafts and boats made the crossing certain, and plied incessantly during the action.

The ranges on the south had been marked off plainly by white-washed ant-hills or boulders up to seven hundred and sixty yards, and sharpshooters had been posted, even in the branches of the trees, on the river banks.

Five guns, sheltered by epaulements, were on the embankment north of the railway bridge in the centre of the position, two more were on the right, and two on the left flank, with a Maxim on the promontory between the Modder and the Riet, and a Hotchkiss, which was moved wherever it was needed during the action.

The Free Staters were on the right, the Boers on the left, covering the line of retreat on Jacobsdaal. Cronje was in chief command of the whole.

Lord Methuen, little expecting the above arrangements for his reception, calculated on breakfasting in Modder River village about 8 A.M., and his men did not even carry rations. Methuen had generally requisitioned or bought fresh provisions, and had not had recourse to his reserve rations or tinned meats. He had at first intended to turn the left flank of the Boers, whom he supposed to be concentrated at Spytfontein; but having ascertained that the Modder and the upper waters of the Riet were not fordable, as previously reported, and having, as he thought, made certain that the banks of the Riet and Modder Rivers

were not held in force by the Boers, he determined to advance on Spytfontein by the fords at Modder River village. At dawn the foremost Lancers and mounted infantry advanced, and were suddenly fired at from some point about a mile east of the Modder River village; this was done by the Boers to divert Lord Methuen's attention from their real position, where he still thought there was, at most, only a small force. The English artillery opened fire, therefore, about 5.30 A.M. at a range of four thousand three hundred and fifty yards on the Boer left flank, and the duel of the guns lasted two hours.

Four naval guns were detrained on the left of the railway, and replied to the four guns in the Boer centre, at a very long range and with no connection by signaller with the front.

According to the correspondent of the *Hamburgher Nach-richten*, the range was too great for the field-guns (R.F.A.), and of the naval shells two-thirds at least failed to burst; he adds that the Boer artillery were never silenced by their opponents, but ceased firing about 4 P.M., as there was nothing to aim at.

The trenches being invisible, the R.F.A. guns fired mainly on the buildings in Modder River village in the rear of the Free Staters and on the islet; the Boer fire was well directed, but many of their shells failed to burst.

About 8 A.M. Lord Methuen thought that the rear-guard of the Boers, which he supposed to be in front of him, was giving way, and ordered the deployment of the brigades.

The infantry then advanced in extended order to

within six hundred and fifty yards of the river bank, where, at 8.10 A.M., they first drew the fire of the Boers in the trenches.

The 9th Brigade on the left, under Pole-Carew, were reinforced by the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders from the Orange River station during the morning; this regiment had had no food since they had breakfasted at De Aar station at 10 A.M. on the 27th, and were in consequence little fitted for a long day's fighting without food.

The English still doubted whether there were any trenches on the south of the river.

As the flanks could not be turned, Lord Methuen resolved on a front attack, and the line advanced with difficulty another hundred yards by short rushes. During the whole day the centre remained lying on the ground, unable to advance further, and under the fire of their invisible adversaries. The Guards on the right made two unsuccessful attempts to reach the Boers' left flank.

From right to left the 1st Scots Guards, 3rd Grenadier Guards, and 2nd Coldstreams were in front, reaching to the 9th Brigade; the 1st Coldstreams were in reserve, but deployed at 8.10 A.M. to prolong the front line to the right.

At this time the heavy fire destroyed the whole machine-gun detachment of the Scots Guards, and the piece had to be abandoned. With great difficulty the line replied with a few volleys. The officers displayed the greatest bravery, and Lieutenant-Colonel Stopford (commanding 2nd Coldstreams) was killed; many others were killed and wounded.

As the Russians at Plevna, so here the Guards, lying prone on the ground, scooped with their bayonets, each man for himself, some sort of hollow or shelter from the rain of bullets, that never ceased.

On the left the 47th Regiment, leading the 9th Brigade, were stopped by the fire from a farm and native village situated on rising ground south of the weir. For several hours the brigade remained lying in position under fire, and unable to see their enemy or reply at all effectively.

In the afternoon the farm and kraal were taken by two companies of the Yorkshire L.I., under Lieutenant-Colonel Barter, and at the same time the 47th carried the rocky position forming the enemy's extreme right.

At 3 P.M. the 62nd Battery R.F.A. opened fire on the left of the 9th Brigade, and it was the only battery that advanced within a mile of the Boers. Indeed, the 75th Battery had, after losing three officers and eleven men, and expending all their ammunition but five rounds, to retire to two thousand yards under a heavy fire, losing twenty-five horses in limbering up.

The artillery kept up a heavy fire all day, firing two hundred rounds per gun, and the arrival of the 62nd Battery at 3 P.M. increased the number of guns to twenty-two.

Twice during the day there was a lull in the firing, once at noon and once later, and in these intervals many officers and men fell asleep from sheer exhaustion and want of food.

Later in the day great efforts were made on the

flanks. On the right Lieutenant-Colonel Codrington, with two officers and twenty-four men of the Coldstreams, forded the Riet under a heavy fire. The Boers brought up their Hotchkiss, and being unsupported, the brave band were obliged to retire across the river, linked hand-in-hand on account of the current.

The right fell back on a large reservoir, and there used a Maxim gun (presumably that of the 1st Coldstreams) with good effect. One company was reduced to twenty men, and these, without food all day, were glad of nightfall and the news that the attack was to be postponed till the next morning. After dark a transport wagon brought up a ration of rum and some food for the men, who needed it badly.

About 4 P.M., on the left, the enemy's fire having slackened, and some of the Free Staters having withdrawn from their posts, General Pole-Carew sent Lieutenant-Colonel Barter and four hundred men of the Yorkshire L.I. to cross the dam. Holding on to the ironwork of the weir, with great difficulty they got across, and being followed by some sections of Engineers and of their own battalions, entrenched themselves on the north bank. As darkness set in the Argyll and Sutherland crossed at the same point, but while crossing were fired at from a house occupied by the enemy. Once across, however, a small body dashed at the house, broke open the door, and bayoneted the garrison.

Before night nearly all the 9th Brigade were across and entrenched, the Engineers working splendidly, and after an hour and a half of occasional

shots on both sides this hard-fought battle ended at 7 P.M.

The advantages of smokeless powder were now more conspicuous; for the Boers were *never* at any time during the day seen by the English gunners or firing line, while every time the latter rose on the plain for a short rush they stood out like targets for their adversaries' aim.

At 5.30 P.M., when Lord Methuen was wounded, Sir Henry Colvile, commanding the Brigade of Guards, took command, but there still seemed to be no combination of effort or unity of direction.

The fight remained undecided till nightfall, and only the next morning did the English discover, to their astonishment, that the Boers had evacuated their position during the night.

The want of unity of direction, which characterised this action throughout, was due, first to insufficient reconnaissance before the action; and, secondly, to the insufficient use of competent officers, as gallopers, to keep the general informed of what was going on in different parts of the field, and to enable him to direct the various units.

This is admitted by Lord Methuen's despatch when he says:—'It is certain that when it is not possible to ride over the ground at two thousand yards from the enemy without risk of being shot, one is without means of sending orders. Personally, I am the first to admit that during most of the day I remained in positions where I should not have been, but the only way to see what passed was to go near to the firing line.'

These words speak for themselves, and explain both the want of unity of direction and the fact that the general was himself wounded, rather than allow his orderly officers to run the risk for him, while he remained where messengers could reach him, and he could send word to all parts of the field.

From an American source we have an explanation of the defection of the Free Staters on the Boer right as due to their terror of the lyddite shells used by the naval guns. These unorganised and undisciplined commandoes, once their courage failed them (though they had lost but few men themselves, and the English advance, up to 4 P.M., was practically stopped), cared nothing for their leaders or their orders, but simply fled to the north.

General Cronje, who had maintained the fight on his left successfully till 7 P.M., when he found his right turned, fearing a night attack with the bayonet, ordered a general retreat on Spytfontein and Jacobsdaal.

At first he had abandoned his guns, but finding the English, from utter exhaustion, made no effort to follow him, he sent back and brought them away!

The English losses were as follows:—

UNIT.	OFFICERS.		MEN.		
	Killed.	Wounded.	Killed.	Wounded.	Missing.
Staff,	1	1	0	0	0
9th Lancers,	0	0	0	1	0
18th Battery R.F.A.,	0	0	0	9	0
62nd Battery R.F.A.,	0	1	1	4	0
75th Battery R.F.A.,	0	3	2	11	0
7th Company R.E.,	0	1	0	2	0
8th Company R.E.,			0	1	0
3rd Grenadiers,	0	3	14	40	1
1st Coldstreams,	0	0	2	18	0
2nd Coldstreams,	2	1	10	57	0
1st Scots Guards,	0	2	12	37	1
1st Northumberland Fusiliers,	0	0	11	34	0
2nd Yorkshire L.I.,	1	3	10	47	0
1st Loyal North Lancashire,	0	1	3	18	0
1st Argyll and Sutherland,	0	2	23	86	0
R.A.M.C.,	0	1	0	1	0
S.A. Reserve,	0	0	0	1	0
Rimington's Guides,	0	0	0	3	0
Total,	4	19	88	370	2

Total 483 of all ranks, or 7·25 per cent. of the troops engaged

No account of the battle of Modder River would be in any way complete without the proclamation urgently made by President Steyn to the Free Staters the very next day, the 29th November, and repeated by President Kruger, without the inferred blame, to the whole of the Transvaal.

It ran—'Honourable officers and burghers, we must thank God for the help hitherto given us, and we pay homage to the valour displayed by our burghers in the

struggle maintained against the enemy. But I am obliged to tell you that we shall not be able to reckon on the Divine assistance unless you have confidence in your officers and affection for them.

'We have heard with sorrow that only one thousand Free Staters took part in the last engagement, and that many remained in camp while their brethren engaged and even defeated the enemy.

'I should be wanting in my duty if I did not impress on you all that such conduct can only bring results disastrous to our independence, and might have most grievous consequences for our brethren.

'I insist then that you understand that you, for your part, owe obedience to your commanding officers, and that they, on their part, must march alongside of you in every engagement.

'If we do this, I am sure that the God of our fathers, who is our God, will not abandon us, and will give us the victory. Therefore let no man quit his post, and let each one do his duty!

'Let us remember that we fight for all we hold dear to us.'

But for this defection of the Free Staters it is doubtful if the English left could have crossed the river, and this, the first combat on the western theatre to be fought on equal terms, would have resulted in a severe check to Lord Methuen's advance, and in even greater loss to his army.

As it turned out, Lord Methuen found himself across the Riet and within thirty miles of Kimberley. His advance has received unstinted and almost unmeasured praise from the *Army and Navy Gazette*, which had

generally been more judicial and professional in its tone.

I am unwilling to give my own opinion, but I would here quote from the report of a lecture given on the 27th February by a senior officer on the staff:—

'The great masters of war, Napoleon and Von Moltke, maintained that commanders must observe the rules of war or pay the penalty. Although it may be said that no European troops have up to this faced such weapons of destruction and appliances of war, still there have been the examples of Von Steinmetz and Suleiman Pacha as a warning to commanders to avoid frontal attacks, even before quick-firing guns and magazine rifles came into use.'

At the Irish manœuvres of 1899 Lord Roberts said:—

'Under the existing conditions of war, which render a frontal attack over open ground *impossible*, reconnaissance is, perhaps, the most important of the many important duties that devolve on commanders. No preparation for battle can be satisfactory until information of the strength and position of the enemy has been ascertained.'

The credit of their last engagement was given by the English to their artillery, the bulk of whose fire was directed, not on the Boer trenches, whose position was practically unknown, but on the buildings in Modder River and on the islets on the Riet.

The ruin and destruction it caused was noted after the battle, and, fortunately for us, a doctor with the Naval Brigade took some accurate observations, which are given by the *Army and Navy Gazette*, and were

taken on the mud walls of a stable, four inches thick, and protected by galvanised sheet-iron on the outside. The piece observed on measured twenty feet long by ten high. This had ten holes produced by shells that failed to burst in either the front or back walls, but did so in the wall of another house about fifty yards in rear, three irregular holes from bursting shells, thirty-one made by Lee-Metford bullets, and five hundred and thirty-three by shrapnel balls. These last mostly penetrated the sheet iron or tin, and remained imbedded about half an inch in the mud. All the Lee-Metford bullets were only stopped by the second wall.

This same doctor gave as the result of his experience in different parts of the world that the danger resulting from wounds from bullets increased in the following list from the least dangerous to the worst:—

1. Mauser. 2. Krag-Sörgenten. 3. Lee-Metford. 4. The same, hollow pointed. 5. Any of the above with the point cut off. 6. Dum Dum. 7. Remington in copper, as employed by the Philippines. 8. Lead Remingtons or Martini-Henrys. 9. Shrapnel balls. 10. Fragments of bursting shell.

Within the zone of fire of one thousand seven hundred and fifty yards the duty of supplying the troops with either ammunition or water was found extremely dangerous, if not impossible.

It was most bravely done by the English, and ammunition was often brought up under fire at close range by the bearer crawling along, Indian fashion, on his stomach. Stretcher-bearers were still less able to bring off the wounded, and several lost their lives in the attempt.'

For the next ten days Lord Methuen's column rested at Modder River, while their communications were assured by constructing and repairing the bridges over the Riet. On the 29th November Captain W. R. Stewart, R.E., threw a bridge of boats over the Riet forty yards west of the damaged railway bridge; he then replaced the latter by a temporary bridge to the east of it on the water level, approached by deep cuttings, in which he laid the permanent way. The first train was able to cross on the 7th December, seven days after the commencement of the work. Both transport and supply departments worked indefatigably, and a daily bread train left the bakeries at Orange River station for the front.

On the 1st of December the column was reprovisioned for a fortnight.

Note.—The rough sketch-map that faces p. 110 was prepared in March, and the Boer trenches indicated must not be confused with the more elaborate defences prepared by Commandant Cronje *after* the battle of Majesfontein, and abandoned by him on the 15th of February.

CHAPTER VI

BATTLE OF MAJESFONTEIN

BETWEEN the 3rd and 8th of December the following reinforcements reached Modder River :—The 12th Lancers, G Battery R.H.A., a howitzer battery, each gun throwing a five-inch fifty-pound shell charged with lyddite, the Highland Brigade, under Wauchope, a balloon section, and a 4·7 naval gun from H.M.S. *Doris*, which was immediately named 'Joe Chamberlain.'

On the 6th Lord Methuen was sufficiently recovered to resume command, and his division now mustered about twelve thousand men, made up as follows:—The 9th and 12th Lancers, under Major-General Babington; thirteen battalions of foot in three brigades; one battery R.H.A., and three R.F.A. (twenty-four guns); one howitzer battery (four guns); five naval guns; the 1st Balloon Section; twelve hundred mounted infantry; the 8th Railway Company and several field companies R.E.; besides mounted police.

After the 29th November Lord Methuen was in nightly communication with Kimberley by means of electric searchlights, and on the 4th December he received the following message from Lieutenant-Colonel

Kekewich, commanding the garrison:—'Have provisions for forty days, forage for thirty, with plenty of water.' This brave officer had already made two sorties on the 25th and 28th of November, so as to aid indirectly in the actions at Enslin and Modder River.

The Boer forces meantime were strongly reinforced, and entrenched themselves across the English line of advance from Spytfontein to Majesfontein; they held Read's Drift seven miles west of Modder River on the Riet with a commando, while from Jacobsdaal, their *point d'appui* on the east in the Free State, they threatened the English right and rear. Their outposts were in daily contact with the English, and they found means in the British camp of instant information as to Lord Methuen's movements and plans.

Four hundred of the local farmers patrolled the Riet and Modder Rivers in their interests, and at Jacobsdaal they had a corps of express riders, on both horse and bicycle, under Captains Fichardt and Jooste, who acted as both scouts and orderlies. Every night Lord Methuen had a battalion and a half on outpost duty, while by day the cavalry patrolled his front and flanks.

General Cronje despatched from Jacobsdaal a force of about one thousand Free Staters, including the Scandinavian corps and three guns, under Commandant Prinsloo, to cut the railway line near Graspan, where they attacked, at 11.30 A.M. on the 8th, two companies of the Northamptons (2nd Battalion) guarding the railway, blew up two culverts, and tore up one hundred feet of line, cutting the telegraph wires. At

1.30 P.M. reinforcements arrived from Modder River, and the Boers retired after a very smart piece of work, which cost the English the loss of fourteen men wounded. The 8th Company R.E., however, repaired the whole damage under ten hours.

On the 5th and 6th President Steyn visited Jacobsdaal and all the Free State laagers, exhorting his burghers, giving audiences, and inspecting the hospitals. That at Jacobsdaal was admirably managed by German doctors.

General Cronje, meantime, strengthened his lines, and sent up from Jacobsdaal reinforcements and all kinds of stores; but being sixty miles or more from the trunk railway of the Free State, he was less easily supplied than his adversaries.

On the 8th December Lord Methuen, who could not yet mount his horse, but drove about in a dogcart, considered himself sufficiently strong to renew his advance.

By the 9th December General Cronje had completed his preparations on the line Spytfontein-Majesfontein-Jacobsdaal for stopping Lord Methuen's further advance. He had altogether, perhaps, fifteen thousand men, of whom, at most, from seven to eight thousand occupied the trenches on and in front of the kopjes near Bisset's Farm, or Majesfontein.

Advancing by the railway from Modder River station, for the first five miles the ground rises slowly, but for the next five, to Spytfontein, the slope is broken by a network of hills, between which the railway runs up a kind of *cul de sac*, terminating in Spytfontein station, and bordered on both sides by

commanding and rocky kopjes, which extend to some distance east and west of the line, so that the Boers occupying the base and also the summit of the slopes formed a crescent within which they hoped to envelop Lord Methuen's force. The east horn of the crescent included Majesfontein Hills, which formed a kind of bastion on the east of the railway line; beyond this the line of shelter trenches at the base was thrown back and continued towards Jacobsdaal. General Cronje placed three or four guns on these heights, and also formed, in places, an upper line of trenches at the top of the slope, in which men armed with Martini-Henrys and black powder were intended to draw the fire of the English, while the main line of trenches, ingeniously concealed with brushwood and filled with the Free Staters and others, armed with Mausers and smokeless powder, was placed in front of the foot of the rocky slopes, so as to sweep the plain with horizontal fire. He thus obtained, in places, two lines of rifle fire, and put the Free Staters where it was less dangerous to remain than to retreat up the slopes. The south-east corner of this bastion was formed by a very steep kopje nearly one hundred and fifty feet high. Beyond this the line followed the edge of slightly rising ground in the plain to the Modder River, and was well sheltered by undergrowth.

Lord Methuen, however, was suspicious of these preparations, and, taught by experience, desired if possible to locate the trenches and ascertain the strength of his enemy by an armed reconnaissance or demonstration. He gives in the first eight paragraphs

of his despatch, dated 15th February, the reasons which led him to decide on an attack on the Boer centre at or before daybreak. The whole of this despatch, as given in the *Times* of March 17, 1900, is printed in Appendix C.

Early on the 9th December thirty oxen dragged 'Joe Chamberlain' to an elevated spot about a mile north of the camp of the Highland Brigade, and about five thousand yards from the bastion of Majesfontein. Hence it threw sixteen shells, but without provoking any reply. On the right the cavalry drew a few rifle shots, and the 9th Brigade started to support them, but all the troops returned early into camp, and an officer of the Guards, writing that evening, said the troops had no knowledge either of Lord Methuen's intentions or of the enemy's position, or even of the country, of which they had no decent maps.

The next day, Sunday, at 2 P.M., all the artillery moved out to within two thousand eight hundred yards of the Boers, supported by the 9th Lancers and the Highland Brigade. The latter left their camp on Modder River at 2.30 P.M., and after telling off some companies to remain with the guns, marched along the Kimberley Road to the right of the railway to about two thousand five hundred yards from the Majesfontein Hills, where they extended from their left, and advanced another thousand yards, trying ineffectually to draw the enemy's fire. As they could see nothing, the rank and file, at least, believed the position to have been evacuated. In the evening they received orders to bivouac about two thousand yards from the

Majesfontein Slopes, with the Seaforth Highlanders thrown out as outposts. It was known that they were to advance at 1 A.M. on the position, and it was believed in the Black Watch that General Wauchope had wished to bivouac the whole brigade in their extended order ready for the advance, but that Lord Methuen, who accompanied him in the march out, overruled this. At 2 P.M. it had commenced to rain, getting worse as night fell. The brigade had been allowed to carry one blanket to every two men, but in many cases the men had neglected to take one, as each man wanted to carry his own food. From 4.30 P.M. till 6.45 P.M. a continuous bombardment of the position was kept up, and the lyddite shells of the howitzers, falling among the boulders on the kopjes, were far more effective than they were the next day in shelling the trenches in the open plain. 'Joe Chamberlain' took up the same position as the day before, but no reply was wrung from the Boers. The green clouds of poisonous gas hung like mushrooms where the lyddite shells burst, and the effect of the explosion on everything within a considerable radius was terrible. The main line of Boer trenches was untouched, as the English guns were directed on to the kopjes behind them. As a demonstration it may have been effective, but as a reconnaissance it was useless, and even misleading. From the absolute silence of the Boers it seemed doubtful whether they had not evacuated the position; and Lord Methuen determined to carry the kopjes by an attack at daybreak on the 11th, with the bayonet, and intrusted General Wauchope with the task,

hoping by this means to open a road to Spytfontein after crowning the heights.

The position of the advanced or main trench was unknown, and its occupation was equally uncertain!

The Artillery, 9th Lancers, and Highland Brigade bivouacked where they stood on the east of the railway, two miles from Modder River station. The 9th Brigade remained in their camp near the station, but the Guards crossed the Modder by a ford higher up at nightfall, and bivouacked on the right bank. No talking, smoking, or lights were allowed in the bivouacs, and, indeed, the men had but few hours for their needed rest. In some cases the men had worked in pairs, one carrying the blanket while the other carried the ration for the two, a 1-lb. tin of bully-beef and as much biscuit as they chose to take in their haversacks. They had no greatcoats. About 9.30 P.M. Wauchope rode off to see Lord Methuen and get his final orders before midnight. Fall-in was ordered for 12.30 A.M.

On the 11th, towards 1 A.M., the men fell in in silence. Since the moon set it had poured with rain, and every man was soaked to the skin already. No coffee could be made, and as they marched off in battalion quarter-column in the pitch darkness the Highland Brigade might have been a ghostly army instead of flesh and blood. The only light was an occasional match lighted in rear of each battalion as a guide for the one behind it. Truly a Tennyson or a Kinglake is needed to give dramatic force to this tragedy! Absolute silence reigned, the rank and file had no idea of the plan of action; ignorant of the

extent of the Boer lines, some thought a flank attack from the east was intended; except the regimental commanders and Lord Methuen's own staff, no one but their enemies had any idea of what they were doing. 'A' Company of the Black Watch led the way by its left, directed by two Africander members of Rimington's Guides, whose loyalty was afterwards questioned. On their left again strode Wauchope, carrying his old claymore and accompanied by Captain Rennie and Lieutenant Wauchope, his aides-de-camp. All the officers except Wauchope carried rifles like the men. As the Black Watch advanced the Seaforths withdrew their outposts, and fell in behind them, also in quarter-column. They were followed by the Argyll and Sutherland Regiment, while the Highland Light Infantry completed the column. Ropes had been issued to connect the guides from front to rear, but in many cases these were either not used or discarded early in the advance. There were thus ninety-six lines of men, including supernumeraries, advancing shoulder to shoulder in thirty-two companies in pitch darkness, over ant-heaps, holes, or boulders; their advance must have been quite audible for some considerable distance.

The arrangements made, and the orders given, are detailed in paragraphs thirteen to seventeen of Lord Methuen's despatch (see Appendix C), but the element of surprise was from the first eliminated, both by the nature of the advance and by communication made with the enemy by flash-lights and even by rifle shots. The left guides of the front companies of the Black Watch and one other battalion were certainly con-

nected by ropes, but the darkness was so intense during the advance that a corporal three files from the left of H Company, 2nd Black Watch, and a sergeant in the supernumerary rank of G Company were neither of them able to see any rope between G and H Company; they remembered that an officer, believed to be the Adjutant of the Seaforths (who had been to the front along the left guides to get instructions) came in front of H Company, 2nd Black Watch, from its left on his return, thinking he had reached his own regiment. Finding his mistake, he went back in front of the left guide, and rejoined the Seaforths immediately in rear.

About 1.30 A.M., in addition to the rain, there came on a heavy thunderstorm with flashes of lightning, which affected the compasses carried by Major Benson, R.F.A., Lord Methuen's D.A.A.G. (A.), who accompanied Wauchope in the advance. Daybreak was timed for 3.25 A.M., and according to paragraph thirteen of the despatch, the distance to be covered had been calculated at two and a half miles, and therefore the fall-in was ordered for 12.30 A.M. The actual distance would appear to have been considerably less, perhaps one and a half miles more nearly.

During the advance, especially on the right of the column, some men pushed into the company or battalion in front of them, while others dropped to the rear, and the companies themselves to some extent lost touch with their guides, and became dependent on the directions of their officers. The sergeant in the rear of each battalion struck a match, every minute or so, to guide the battalion in rear. No other

light was shown except by those in possession of bull's-eye lanterns, including at least one of the two men of Rimington's Guides marching with Wauchope.

This body of devoted Highlanders, under a chief whose name is immortal in the British Army, and whose personality can never be forgotten by those who knew him, marched on in quarter-column, knowing naught, heeding naught, but their duty and their chief—

'Theirs but to do and die.'

Even the leaders little thought how near was the Boer line, and were surprised when, just before 2 A.M., they came on to a wire cattle-fence at six hundred and fifty yards actually from the enemy's trenches. Beyond this they found themselves on a kind of glacis stripped of all shelter, and even of all obstacles, except a second wire fence similar to the first.

But on arriving at the fence it was found that the head of the column had lost direction and was too much to the left. Direction was accordingly altered to the right after a few minutes' halt. The black outline of the south-east spur of the Majesfontein Hills could just be seen looming in the distance, and gave the new direction. Thus the column advanced diagonally across the front of the Boer trenches.

In these trenches, in deathly silence, waited their enemy, fully informed by his spies of every movement in the English camp and of all orders issued by Lord Methuen, but giving no sign of life. Either the sentries kept no guard, or, as the British thought, the position had been evacuated!

About two hundred and fifty yards beyond the fence Wauchope gave the order to deploy for attack. 'A' Company of the 2nd Black Watch was ordered to extend from its centre, while the remaining seven companies were to deploy and extend outwards on each side of it. The two next battalions in rear were to have extended on the left of the Black Watch with the Highland Light Infantry in support. Hardly was the deployment commenced, in excellent order, but four hundred yards only from the unsuspected trench, when one of the Africander guides must have flashed a signal from his bull's-eye to the Boers, as a number of men on the left of the column bear witness that they distinctly saw an answering flash from their left front. Immediately, about a hundred yards off on the left, a single rifle shot was clearly heard, and instantly a hail of Mauser bullets commencing from the right tore through the ranks. 'Some one had blundered!'

Men were mown down by companies; one alone stood calm and unmoved, though the bullets of the first discharge tore the cap from his head. Thinking only how to save his countrymen and do his duty, he gave the command to 'Take open order and lie down.' Many rallied to him and advanced on the enemy; every rank did its duty, but could do no more. At the second or third discharge Wauchope, who for himself disdained all shelter, fell but fifteen yards from the enemy's trench, his body riddled with bullets, his face towards the enemy, and his heart with his countrymen. Near him fell the colonel of the Black Watch, the gallant Coode, five of his officers and nearly

seventy of his men killed, including the writer's servant, who had rejoined his old battalion.

Four times in some ten awful minutes the Boers refilled their magazines. What happened exactly during those minutes no one will know, but the commands were passed from the front to the rear by the officers and non-commissioned officers in the supernumerary ranks of each company. The men threw themselves flat on the ground and, as ordered, fixed bayonets; each company then endeavoured to move to the flank, to clear its front. As soon as this was done the officers ordered the charge, but this was often impossible, and the last company of the Black Watch (H) only advanced some eight or ten paces and then lay down again. Lieutenant-Colonel Hughes Hallett, who commanded the Seaforth Highlanders, and after the death of Wauchope took command of the brigade, immediately ordered his battalion to 'Fix bayonets and charge,' but commands were ineffectual, as the column became rapidly disorganised, and hundreds of men were killed or wounded in the first two minutes.

Some one in the front line gave the word to retire, and a corporal of the H Company of the Black Watch describes how his men mostly crawled back on their hands and knees to avoid the bullets. Soaked to the skin, wearied with want of sleep, and half dazed by what was happening around him, he walked back perfectly sick with fatigue, and looking only for some hollow or shelter from the bullets which were knocking over those about him like nine-pins. Dawn was beginning to break, and about fifty yards back he saw a hollow place to which several others were moving. At

that moment his foot slipped and he fell on his face, and lay quite flat, not daring to move or raise his head. After counting twelve bullets whirring past him, he crawled forward to the hollow and got into it. Two men, retiring after him, were wounded and fell into the hollow, so that he, a corporal of the Black Watch, found himself jammed by the bodies of a Seaforth Highlander and a Highland Light Infantry man.

Presently he managed to rise a little on his elbow, when a bullet tore his sleeve and he lay down again for about ten minutes. Meantime, those who were able were retiring about one hundred yards, to behind the wire fence, where there was some cover from bushes and ant-heaps. Here the officers that remained were rallying the men to form a firing-line, and were re-opening fire on the Boer trench. One of their first discharges wounded this plucky corporal in the head, and he lay there insensible till the middle of the day. When he recovered his senses he saw the Gordon Highlanders advancing and passing him in extended order. He saw a balloon go up, and after an hour he crawled to the bush and lay there nearly twenty-four hours until he was picked up during the armistice next day, and carried to the rear, *en route* for the base hospital at Wynberg.

We have it on the authority of the *Times* that, after the loss of their leader and some six hundred of their comrades, the brigade fled 'like sheep,' as one of them said. It was a *sauve qui peut* as far as the bushes. The Boers only paused to rapidly refill their magazines, but the darkness sheltered the flying Highlanders. This was for a moment dispelled by a lyddite shell

from 'Joe Chamberlain,' which burst above the Boer position, and from that moment the infantry battle was lost, and the artillery combat commenced.

After the command 'Deploy for attack,' as one of the Black Watch was fixing his bayonet the blade dropped from his hand in three pieces, shattered by the bullets of the enemy. Nothing can better illustrate the intensity of the fire that in a few minutes laid low one-fifth of the brigade. The darkness and confusion were such that it is reported that a Scotch doctor advancing to the foremost companies was killed by the bayonets of the men near him, and trodden under foot in their flight. In the more sheltered ground behind the wire fence the officers rallied their men, and during the morning many of the most heroic episodes of this memorable fight probably took place.

One incident we borrow from the *Bloemfontein Express*:—'Repeatedly the brave Highlanders essayed to break our line, but in vain. One officer reached a point fifteen paces from the trench, shouting, 'Now, boys, here we are!' and waving his cap, when he fell with three bullets in his heart. At fifty paces off the Highlanders lay in heaps; forty were made prisoners and seemed heartbroken.'

The *Black and White Budget* gives another, showing the chivalry born, in both sides, of hard fighting and true courage:—'Two officers and twelve men succeeded in getting almost to the trench. Their opponents, struck by their bravery, instead of firing, came out of the trench, surrounded, and disarmed them. The cornet then advanced, and said to the prisoners, "You are free to go; we shall not fire till

you reach your lines. One cannot fight against such brave men."'

The rain only stopped at 3 A.M., and the intense darkness, together with the thick hedges of prickly cactus, had rendered the advance most difficult, and, perhaps, in open order it would have been impossible.

The absence of all effective reconnaissance and the complete ignorance of the enemy's real position, and even of their presence, can alone explain why the deployment was not made at least fifteen hundred yards further from the Boer line of trench. In a frontal attack over open ground commanded by the enemy's position, even in the intense darkness, the deployment should have taken place at least a mile from the supposed position of the enemy; at any rate, an advance of a brigade in battalion quarter-columns was clearly inadmissible.

It would seem that Lord Methuen trusted to surprise the enemy, if they had not already fled, and that, instead, the brigade were themselves surprised by an enemy who were forewarned of their every movement, and who reserved their fire until it was at once decisive.

We have seen how treachery and espionage contributed to the preparation of this battle by the Boers, and it must be understood that the signal shot, given in the silence and darkness which shrouded the quarter-columns when the deployment was ordered, was evidently the work of a Boer accompanying the brigade, but at a distance of a hundred yards or so. It was this shot which made the survivors assert that the brigade was within one hundred yards of the Boers

when the latter opened fire, whereas the distance, when measured afterwards, was found to be four hundred yards.

I owe this reasoning to Captain Pain-vin, whose account of the battle, based on those of the *Times* and *Morning Post*, is the best I have seen.

As it was now becoming light, the twenty-eight British guns came into action, the howitzers on the left rear at three thousand eight hundred yards, the R.F.A. in the centre at one thousand six hundred and fifty yards, and the R.H.A. battery at the same range on rising ground to the right front, where three of the guns enfiladed the trench in front of the Highland Brigade, while the others shelled the prolongation of the same towards the Modder. The Scots Guards supported the three R.F.A. batteries, the 47th (Loyal North Lancashire) guarded 'Joe Chamberlain,' the 5th Fusiliers were in rear of the howitzers, and the cavalry and mounted infantry were on the right of the R.H.A., who occupied the post both of honour and of danger, as they ran a risk of enfilade fire. The whole front was three and three-quarter miles in extent.

The extreme right was early in contact with the enemy, and the 12th Lancers dismounted a squadron to drive back the Boer skirmishers. The only Boer gun that replied to the English was a Maxim-Nordenfeldt.

For three hours the R.A. endeavoured to subdue the rifle fire from the Boer trenches, while the Highland Brigade lay flat on the ground unable for further effort. One-third of its officers and one-fifth of its men being *hors de combat*, it could hardly be expected to be of

further use in attack that day. Scotland had indeed lost, as at Flodden, the 'Flowers of the Forest,' and there was mourning through the length and breath of the land for many a day.

At noon the 1st Gordon Highlanders (75th), however, who did not belong to the brigade, and had been in rear with the convoy, were ordered to the front, and advanced by half battalions in extended order, while the two battalions of Coldstreams reinforced the right. At dawn the Yorkshire Light Infantry, under Colonel Barter, had marched up the river Modder, leaving three companies to guard the ford by which the Guards had crossed; they marched up to Brown's Drift on our extreme right. This they held and secured all day under a heavy fire from the Boers, who, under cover of the brushwood, endeavoured to envelop our right flank. The regiment held its own even after its ammunition supply gave out. The Grenadier battalion filled the gap between them and the Coldstreams, and these troops, together with the five companies of Yorkshire L.I., foiled General Cronje, who had intended, while the English were attacking the Majesfontein bastion, to work round their right and attack them in rear.

Meanwhile, the Gordons in turn attacked the Boer trenches, but were stopped by a triple line of wire entanglement, and forced to retire and lie down. During their attack 'the brave Ficksburgers,' as the Free Staters have ever since called them, made a successful counter-attack.

The artillery also, devoting its attention to the Boer trenches, had advanced; the howitzers to two thou-

sand seven hundred and fifty yards, the R.F.A. to twelve hundred, and the R.H.A. to one thousand four hundred and forty yards from the enemy, firing over the heads of the Highlanders, who were unable to advance further. Noon was now passed, and about 1.30 the Boer fire suddenly seemed to revive in intensity.

By this time the firing-line of the Gordons (75th) had lost heavily; some twenty yards in front of them was Colonel Downman, his adjutant, Captain Gordon, his sergeant signaller, and five men; forty yards in rear was K Company. The Boer fire seemed to come from the right, and word was passed that the line was retiring on the right. Colonel Downman at once stood up to see if it was so, and shouted to Captain Towse to bring up his left. Such was the din that he could not be heard, so he walked back thirty yards and put his hand to his mouth to repeat the order. At that moment he was hit and never spoke again, so that Colonel Hughes Hallett, who was not close to him, must have been misinformed that he ever gave the order to retire. The effect on the Highland Brigade, demoralised, but lying in rear of the Gordons, was electrical. It is graphically related by the *Morning Post*. From the high ground occupied by the Guards and R.H.A., some companies of the Gordons could be seen, lying only one hundred and fifty yards from the trenches, keeping up a steady fire, but their supports and the whole remnant of the brigade in rear were in full retreat, until arrested by the Scots Guards in rear of the R.F.A. These last continually supported the Gordons and fired on the trenches. Fortunately the Boer artillery remained

silent, or the fugitives would have lost heavily from shrapnel. At this instant, about 2 P.M., Major Ewart arrived from Lord Methuen with a request to the Highland Brigade to hold its ground until nightfall, but such was the disorder that he could not find a single officer to give the order to. Nevertheless, being now out of range of the Boers on the top of the kopjes, the bagpipes and bugles sounded the 'Assembly,' and the brigade re-formed in tolerable order. The rest of the troops rather expected that Lord Methuen would wait till sundown, and that then, if the Boers had not evacuated their lines, as at Modder River, they would be attacked with the bayonet.

But towards 5.30 P.M. the Boer artillery opened fire for the first time on our ammunition-wagons, which had remained sheltered in a fold of the ground, out of sight of the enemy. Hardly had the first shrapnel shell burst when the Highland Brigade retreated again towards the ambulance. This was decisive; all thought of attack was abandoned, the artillery fired for twenty minutes to cover its own retreat, the howitzer sent a last volley of lyddite shells, and the battle was over. The Boers by their own account were far from elated by their success, and remained silent in their trenches. The Guards prolonged their line to the left to support the Gordons, and the troops bivouacked for the night on the field as they lay.

The artillery had been in action thirteen hours, and each battery had fired over one thousand rounds, rendering the greatest service to their side. The Balloon Section of Engineers made constant ascents

of ten minutes each. The Army Medical Staff distinguished themselves greatly in succouring the wounded, but, nevertheless, a great number of the latter remained out all night, and many were more than twenty-four hours without assistance. Major the Honourable W. Lambton, Coldstream Guards (being unwilling to expose the men who would have carried him to the rear), remained wounded under a bush from 7 A.M. till 1.30 P.M. the next day, over thirty hours, before he was found and attended to. The Boers had been observed to use field-glasses to mark down the officers, at whom they took special aim.

During the night the English convoy retired rapidly on Modder River to clear the way for the troops. The latter spent a miserable night, as the cold was intense, and neither food nor covering was easily to be had.

The next morning the Boers re-opened fire, and the English artillery replied at once, but at 11 A.M. Lord Methuen's force was in full retreat on Modder River, covered as far as possible by their artillery. The retreat of the Guards under a heavy fire was performed as if at drill in Hyde Park, and in perfect order.

The afternoon was given up to an armistice for the burial of the dead and succour of the wounded. This was broken only by 'Joe Chamberlain,' whose naval keepers were not aware of the arrangement made, but were speedily informed and silenced.

The English stretcher-bearers were blindfolded and admitted to the Boer lines, whose occupants had behaved most humanely to the wounded until they could be removed.

The British losses were as follows:—

UNIT.	OFFICERS.		MEN.		
	Killed.	Wounded.	Killed.	Wounded.	Missing.
Brigade Staff, Highlanders,	1	2	0	0	0
Brigade Staff, Cavalry,	0	1	0	0	0
9th Lancers,	0	0	2	8	0
12th Lancers,	0	0	4	16	0
Mounted Infantry,	2	2	0	0	0
G Battery R.H.A.,	0	0	0	4	0
18th Battery R.F.A.,	0	0	0	2	0
62nd Battery R.F.A.,	0	0	0	2	0
75th Battery R.F.A.,	0	0	0	1	0
1st Coldstreams,	0	5	15	42	5
2nd Coldstreams,	0	1	2	22	1
3rd Grenadiers,	0	0	1	3	0
1st Scots Guards,	0	0	2	2	0
2nd R. Highlanders,	6	11	70	203	68
1st Loyal N. Lancashire,	0	0	0	1	0
2nd Seaforths,	5	7	44	137	22
1st Highland L.I.,	2	7	12	69	6
1st Gordon Highlanders,	3	2	6	33	0
1st Argyll and Sutherland,	3	4	23	59	2
2nd Yorkshire L.I.,	0	0	1	10	0
1st York and Lancaster,	0	1	0	0	0
Bechuanaland Police,	1	0	0	0	0
S.A. Reserve,	0	0	0	2	0
R.A.M.C.,	1	1	0	0	0
Total	24	44	182	616	104

Total *hors de combat* of all ranks, nine hundred and seventy, or ten per cent. of those engaged; but in ten minutes the Highland Brigade lost over a fifth of its number, and was, in consequence, demoralised for the rest of the day. Some of the younger officers have said that they remember nothing of what

happened after the Boers opened fire, and that they passed the day as in a kind of a trance. All the officers complained, as at Modder River, of the want of orders from the general.

The Boers report their losses as sixty killed, one hundred and fifty-nine wounded only; but the Scandinavian commando alone lost eighteen killed, forty-three wounded, and nineteen taken prisoners.

The result of this engagement was to give Lord Methuen the information he desired on the 9th and 10th, but at such a cost that he was unable to profit by it.

The troops were discouraged by the way they were taken into action and still more by the precipitate retreat afterwards. The officers and men had lost confidence in their general, and the talks around the camp-fires at Modder River, during the weeks of inaction that followed, were the cause and effect of the want of morale that ensued.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

CHAPTER VII

ENGAGEMENT AT STORMBERG—BATTLE OF COLENSO —CLOSE OF THE YEAR 1899

WE have seen that Sir Redvers Buller had sent General Gatacre to advance along the railway from East London *via* Queenstown, his advanced base, on Bethulie and Springfontein Junction in the Free State. He was to join hands with General French's cavalry by the Naauwpoort-Stormberg railway, the latter general being between Naauwpoort and Arundel on the line Port Elizabeth-Springfontein, by Norval's Pont.

General Gatacre nominally commanded the 3rd Division, and General French a cavalry division, but the relief of Kimberley and Ladysmith was continually diverting their proper units, as they arrived from England, to the Modder River and Natal respectively. Consequently, on the 18th November, General Gatacre had at Queenstown the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles, part of the 2nd Royal Berkshire Regiment, and a few mounted infantry only.

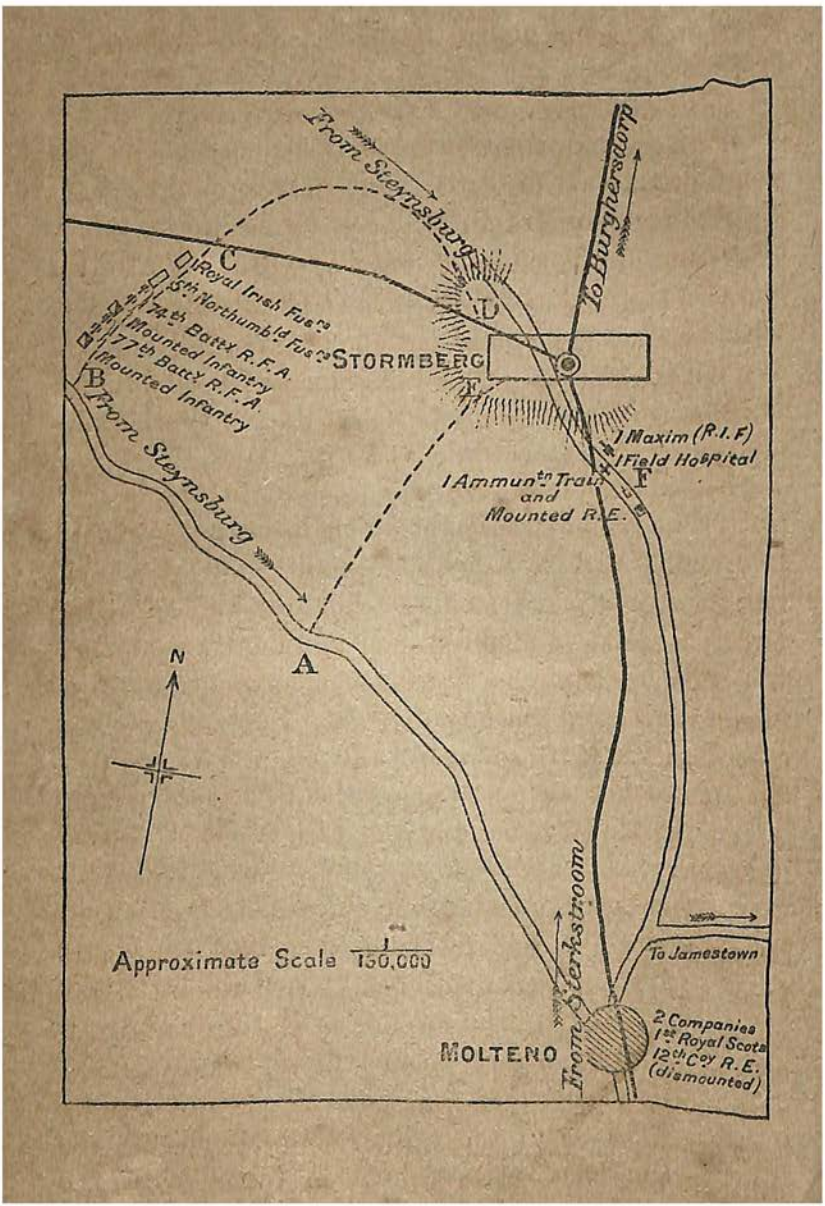
November 22nd he established his camp at Putter's Kraal, with two hundred of Brabant's Horse and a company of Kaffrarian Rifles at Sterkstroom, the junction for Dordrecht, five miles to his front. On

the 27th he sent on eight hundred of the same units to occupy Bushman's Hoek, eight miles further north.

Early in December he was reinforced by the 2nd Northumberland Fusiliers, 1st Royal Scots, 74th and 77th Batteries R.F.A., with a field hospital on the 7th December, and the 12th (Field) Company R.E., some Cape Mounted Police, Kaffrarian Rifles, and Brabant's Horse, consisting of volunteers officered by Colonials. This brought his total to three thousand five hundred men, of whom about one thousand were mounted.

At his camp at Putter's Kraal General Gatacre continually exercised his troops in manœuvres, as well as by sending his mounted men in strong patrols to protect his flanks and rear. On the arrival of the R.F.A. on 5th December, half of their horses having been drawn straight from the London Omnibus Company two days before they left England, the two batteries needed a few days at least to get their animals into training and condition.

At this time the Boers, who had withdrawn from Sterkstroom on Molteno, were distributed as follows:—eight hundred at Dordrecht, with six hundred, and six guns marching to join them from Jamestown, fifteen hundred in position at Stormberg, with four hundred advanced at Molteno, and a commando at Steynsburg, on the line to Middelburg. This line General Gatacre desired to seize in order to join hands with General French, and also to overawe the Cape Dutch farmers, who were very generally joining the invaders. Consequently, on December 8th, he decided


From Steynsburg
To Burghersdorp
C
1 Royal Irish Fus.rs
D
5th Northumb.d Fus.rs
74th Batt.y R.F.A.
Mounted Infantry
77th Batt.y R.F.A.
Mounted Infantry
STORMBERG
D
F
B
From Steynsburg
1 Maxim (R.I.F)
1 Field Hospital
1 Ammun.n Train
and
Mounted R.E.
F
A
N
Approximate Scale 1/50,000
To Jamestown
2 Companies
1st Royal Scots
12th Coy R.E.
(dismounted)
MOLTENO
From Sterkstroom

to seize Stormberg and its junction, by surprise if possible.

On the 8th December 1899, General Gatacre, having ascertained that there were only seventeen hundred Boers with two or three guns at Stormberg, telegraphed at midnight to Penhoek for the force there, consisting of one hundred and sixty Brabant's Horse, and two hundred and thirty-five Cape Mounted Rifles, with four 2·5-inch guns and one Maxim, to join him at once at Molteno. This telegram was not delivered in time to enable them to do so, and this force only arrived on the afternoon of the 10th.

He decided to leave his heavier transport at Putter's Kraal, and brought up his force, consisting of two and a half battalions of infantry, the two field batteries, and some mounted infantry (in all about two thousand five hundred men but lightly equipped), by train to Molteno. One company of 1st Royal Scots was left at Bushman's Hoek, where the remainder of the R.I. Rifles joined the train. At Molteno he left Colonel Waters in charge, with two companies of the 1st Royal Scots and the 12th (Field) Company R.E.

The Boers occupied three faces of Rooi Kop; General Gatacre had intended to attack the south face by the direct road, but, hearing that there were better positions for his guns to the west, he changed his objective to the south-west face, advancing by the Steynsburg road for about five miles before he turned to the right, straight opposite the hill. He marched off in column of fours, with the Royal Irish Rifles in front, followed by the Nor-

thumberland Fusiliers, 74th Field Battery, and Cape Mounted Police.

Then came a detachment of mounted infantry, the 77th Field Battery, more mounted infantry, and, lastly, the ammunition-wagons, field hospital, etc.

The troops left Molteno about 9 P.M. after dark, the field hospital and train under Lieutenant-Colonel Edge, R.A.M.C., in rear. The latter, not having been informed of the change of route, which apparently was decided on at the last moment, on the representations of the local guides, followed the Stormberg road, and would, most probably, have fallen into the hands of the Boers but for an assistant to Major Pollock, the *Times* correspondent.

This gentleman, who farmed land in the neighbourhood, and knew the country, persuaded the two correspondents to remain at Molteno till 11.30 P.M., as he would easily bring them up with the column. Following the direct route, he came up with Lieutenant-Colonel Edge, and found the main column was not in front of him as he expected.

Meanwhile the guide of the main body, who should have turned to the right at the point A on the sketch, for some reason continued his march to the point B, overshooting the mark; he then circled round to his right, and brought the column on to the north-west face at its most difficult point.

Colonel Eager had reported early that his guide seemed to have lost his way; but as the four guides all agreed that they were right, and that time would be saved in the end, General Gatacre pushed on, himself heading the column.

At 12.30 A.M. they halted near Robert's Farm for three-quarters of an hour, as the chief guide reported they were only one and a half miles from the enemy, and at 1.30 A.M., when again on the move, ascertained that they were certainly not on the right route.

Instead of retracing his steps on Molteno, General Gatacre believed the guides that they would come eventually to the desired face, and pushed on till 3.45 A.M. in column of fours. None of the staff appear to have made any use of the luminous compass, so many of which have been taken to South Africa, and which might, as the true road lay due north-west until the column should turn to the right, have kept the troops on the correct route.

The column was consequently marching for seven hours of the night instead of three and a half, and rested for less than one hour instead of four and a half. At dawn the troops, completely worn out, first came in sight of the Boers, and were immediately fired on at close range in both front and flank throughout the column; the infantry at once charged up the hill, but found themselves within a few yards of the Boers, who were firing at them from behind a thick, dry stone rampart. At this point the colonel and the major of the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles fell, and the confusion of the infantry, unable to advance farther, was aggravated by one or two misdirected shells from the Field Artillery. Those who could escape fell back some two hundred and twenty yards. Dog-tired, and not caring whether they were hit by friend or foe, when they were ordered to retreat, some of the men

had almost to be kicked by their officers before they would move.

The rear companies of the two battalions were now extended as a cover to those of the front companies, whom their officers had been able to withdraw from the clutches of the enemy and the rocky and almost precipitous ground. The R.F.A. were ordered up in support, and in their advance one of the guns was overturned, and had to be abandoned in a nullah; later on another was struck by a shell, and had also to be left in ground that was almost impossible for its movement.

It was then necessary to retire across an open space under a heavy infantry fire, and the whole force reformed on rising ground at a distance of some fifteen hundred yards from the enemy, who fortunately showed little inclination for a counter-attack, and in the main contented themselves with following the retreating force with shells from their heavy guns, situated out of range of our artillery. The latter behaved magnificently, taking up position after position in echelon, and greatly assisting the rear-guard, consisting of the Northumberland Fusiliers and Irish Rifles. As the infantry retired across the open space above mentioned, the officers fell in every dismounted man in the new fighting line, without considering whether he were a fusilier or a rifleman, or belonged to the mounted infantry. The main body formed in quarter-column, and General Gatacre ordered a retreat on Molteno at once. The mounted infantry protected the flanks.

It was found, however, that thirteen officers, six

hundred and twenty rank and file, and two guns, remained in the hands of the enemy, in addition to the loss of thirty-two men killed, seven officers and fifty rank and file wounded. The loss of the Boers amounted to eight killed and twenty-seven wounded.

At 11 A.M. on the 10th, General Gatacre reached Molteno, where Colonel Waters, who had been told of the disaster at 7 A.M., appears to have remained inactive.

Meanwhile the ammunition column had taken the wrong road, and had bivouacked at the point F, directly south of the Boers. Consequently this command, which included the Maxim of the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles and the field hospital, ran a great risk of being lost. It was, however, saved by the gallant and prompt action of the *Times* correspondents, who, with two others, hearing brisk firing from the west about 4 A.M., made a reconnaissance, and enabled Lieutenant-Colonel Edge to rejoin the main column as it retreated.

The armoured train was itself very nearly captured, as the line had been torn up, and a heavy gun planted for its destruction. Fortunately the snare was perceived, and the train escaped by a hasty retirement.

The two guns taken by the enemy were only lost because they could not be extricated from such difficult ground; one was overturned, as already mentioned, into a deep nullah, and the other stuck fast in the deep sand during the retreat on Molteno. All the horses of both were killed.

General Gatacre, to whom this disaster came as a terrible shock, retired from Molteno on the 10th on Sterkstroom. At 5 P.M. the two companies of the 1st

Royal Scots and the R.E. left Molteno by train for Bushman's Hoek, the rest of the infantry by train to Sterkstroom, the Divisional Staff, R.F.A., and mounted infantry continued their retreat to Cyfergat.

The retreat was covered by Brabant's Horse, who scouted towards Stormberg, bivouacked at Molteno, and fell back the next day to Cyfergat. On the 11th the force reached Sterkstroom, but they were unable again to take the offensive before the end of the year.

General French, whose escape from Ladysmith on November 2nd will be noted, had only a brigade of cavalry at De Aar Junction. By the 20th November this had been increased to nearly two thousand seven hundred men, consisting of the 6th Dragoon Guards (Carabineers), 6th Inniskilling Dragoons, 10th Hussars, New South Wales Lancers, two hundred New Zealanders, and some companies of mounted infantry, with O and Q Batteries R.H.A.

On the 21st, General French reoccupied Naauwpoort, and on the 23rd sent an armoured train to make a reconnaissance towards Arundel. On the 13th December he sent Lieutenant-Colonel Porter, commanding the Carabineers, with three regiments and one battery, towards Vaal Kop, north of Arundel, to meet some eighteen hundred Boers, who, with two guns, were advancing on Naauwpoort. These were repulsed by the British, who lost two men killed and six wounded.

Taking up again the thread of events in Natal, on the very evening of the battle of Farquhar's Farm, October 30th, the Boer artillery reopened on Ladysmith and the English camp there.

Their positions can be clearly followed by the map of Ladysmith at page 230. On the south five commandoes camped between the Klip River and Flagstaff Spruit, resting on fortified posts at Nelthorpe and Pieters Station; to the east, one was on Lombard's Kop, and two under Erasmus and Meyer (mustering two thousand men) on Isimbulwhana; on the north Joubert had seven camps ranged in a semi-circle from Lombard's Kop to the Van Rienen road; while on the west two Free State commandoes pushed in the English outposts on Dewdrop Spruit. The total force was twenty thousand men, and of these it was rumoured that five or six thousand were to march on Pietermaritzburg. From the 31st October to 3rd November an artillery duel, enlivened by various sorties, continued; on November 2nd the telegraph wires were cut, but General French succeeded in running the gauntlet in the last armoured train for Durban.

On November 1st Lucas Meyer withdrew from Isimbulwhana towards Colenso, and on the 3rd General White attacked Isimbulwhana, leaving Ladysmith by the Beith road. Finding the Boers very weak at first, General Murray, commanding the vanguard, marched on to Estcourt with two thousand men from Ladysmith.

Erasmus's commando, however, forced the main body of the column back on Ladysmith, and completed the blockade.

Meantime Colonel Cooper with six hundred men in garrison at Colenso fell back before Meyer on Estcourt, and the Boers assembled five thousand men at

Colenso, taking up a defensive position commanding the passages of the river, and preventing the relief of Ladysmith from the south.

The number of combatants shut up in Ladysmith on November 3rd was about six thousand five hundred men; and after a cavalry skirmish near Dewdrop on the 6th, the Boers delivered a general attack on the 9th, but were repulsed.

Outside Ladysmith there were now at Estcourt under General Murray about three thousand men.

Durban was, between the 6th and the 8th, put in a state of defence by Captain Scott, of the *Terrible*.

Colonel Noel, R.E., with but twenty-five sailors and three guns—two 12-pounders and one 7-pounder—made Pietermaritzburg defensible by occupying the surrounding heights with earthworks and shelters formed by bales of compressed hay, and by wire entanglements.

The troops at Estcourt consisted almost entirely of infantry, with three weak mounted detachments and the Natal Artillery armed with obsolete 9-pounders, whose range was but four thousand yards. The place itself lay in a hollow, and could only be defended by occupying all the surrounding heights.

The garrison, too feeble for other action, made daily reconnaissances by means of their armoured train. The *Times* strongly condemns the use of these death-traps, except in a flat open country, where the line cannot be tampered with without the fact being known.

After the 3rd November General Joubert formed three columns, directed on Colenso, Weenen, and

Greytown respectively, and marching thenceforward concentrically on Pietermaritzburg; while on November 12th a fourth column crossed Zululand and the lower Tugela, and threatened the line from Durban to Maritzburg.

Colonel Long, R.A., however, succeeding General Murray at Estcourt on the 10th, was reinforced by the West Yorkshires on the 13th, and received orders to hold that place, contrary to Boer expectations.

On the 14th the bluejackets of H.M.S. *Tartar* reached Maritzburg.

Consequently General Botha, marching from Ladysmith, halted with seven thousand men north of Estcourt, while the force formerly at Colenso moved west by Ulundi and Courtown against the English left flank; the Weenen column changed direction right, and the Greytown column advanced by forced marches on Maritzburg to cover the investment of Estcourt.

The plan formed against Maritzburg was now directed against Estcourt, the fourth column on the lower Tugela remaining there. On the 14th the Boers remained on the heights north-east of Estcourt, about five miles away.

Colonel Long, hearing of the movements from Weenen and Colenso, alarmed his forces, packed ready for retreat, and occupied the high ground to the east of the town.

On the morning of the 15th the armoured train under Captain Haldane made a reconnaissance towards Colenso, and got within five miles of that place, when he saw two hundred Boers watering their

horses. The train then retired, but about one and a half miles north of Frere Station was heavily shelled by three cannon at seven hundred and fifty yards only, evidently on a measured range. The driver put on full speed, and immediately the three trucks nearest home left the rail, while a shell dismounted the 7-pounder after it had fired three rounds. The company of Dublin Fusiliers and that of Durban Light Infantry at once detrained and extended as skirmishers, while Winston Churchill and some sailors worked for an hour under a heavy fire to clear the line. The engine then, with only its tender containing some wounded men, started for Estcourt; the infantry tried to withdraw on Frere, but were soon forced to surrender.

Colonel Long sent out one hundred and eighty men to reinforce them, but, arriving too late, they were driven back by superior forces.

The English thus lost one 7-pounder gun, thirty men *hors de combat*, including two officers taken prisoners, as well as sixty men, and Mr. Churchill.

However, on the 16th the 2nd West Surrey and the 2nd East Surrey, on the 17th the Royal Irish Fusiliers, landed at Durban. The 7th, 14th, and 16th Batteries R.A. were expected daily, as well as some Volunteer Horse.

On the 19th the Boers occupied Highlands, completing the blockade of Estcourt, now commanded by General Hildyard, while General Barton with two thousand men at Weston, on the Mooi River, nineteen miles to the south, was no better off.

On the 20th November General Hildyard had about six thousand men at Estcourt, being separated by the

Boer forces from General Barton, who had some five thousand men at Mooi River.

Consequently the former made a night march with five thousand men to attack the Boers near Willow Grange. The 2nd West Yorkshire and 2nd East Surrey captured Brynbella Hill at the point of the bayonet, but, being heavily shelled, were obliged to retire for shelter. At noon the general ordered a retreat, and reached Estcourt with the loss of one officer killed and another taken prisoner, thirteen men killed, sixty-six wounded, and eight captured—in all, eighty-nine of all ranks *hors de combat*.

The 2nd West Yorkshire especially distinguished themselves, losing eight killed and fifty-one wounded. According to the British accounts, the Boers lost about thirty killed and one hundred wounded.

On the 25th November General Joubert, perceiving that fresh reinforcements were constantly landing at Durban, and being ordered from Pretoria to concentrate his forces, abandoned the offensive, and withdrew his different commandoes to the north of the Tugela, to bar the route to Ladysmith. Generals Hildyard and Barton thereupon joined forces at Frere Camp, where they repaired the railway bridge. On the 5th of December Sir Redvers Buller, who had stationed himself at Pietermaritzburg from the 26th November until the remainder of the First Army Corps had arrived, moved his headquarters to the camp at Chieveley, north of Frere. He had there at least seventeen thousand men, comprising the Royal Dragoons, 13th Hussars, South African Light Horse, Natal Carabineers, Imperial Light Horse (one squadron

only), Bethune's and Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, the mounted companies of the 1st K.R.R.C. and of the 1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers. He also had two R.N. guns of 4·7-inch from the *Terrible* (the Natal Naval Artillery Volunteers assisting the sailors), two 12-pounders off the *Tartar*, and twelve from the *Terrible*; also the 7th, 14th, 66th, 64th, and 73rd Batteries R.F.A., one pontoon section, and the 17th Company R.E. Of infantry he had :—

2nd Brigade (Hildyard).—2nd Royal West Surrey, 2nd Devons, 2nd West Yorkshire, and 2nd East Surrey.

4th Brigade (Lyttelton).—2nd Scottish Rifles, 3rd K.R.R.C., 1st Durham Light Infantry, and 1st Rifle Brigade.

5th Brigade (Hart).—1st Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Connaught Rangers, 1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers, and 1st Border Regiment.

6th Brigade (Barton).—2nd Royal Fusiliers, 2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers (four companies only), 1st Royal Welsh Fusiliers, and 2nd Royal Irish Fusiliers.

On the 13th and 14th December, in order to unmask as far as possible the Boer positions, Sir Redvers Buller bombarded those which he could see with eight of his naval guns. The Boers, however, remained obstinately silent, and gave their opponents the impression that they were not occupying the actual banks of the river, but only held the tops of the hills to the north of it.

It will be seen from the map that in the neighbourhood of Colenso the Tugela describes a series of enormous loops, Colenso itself being situated in the centre

of one of the smaller of these on the railway line for Ladysmith. It also forms the centre of a series of hills, some fourteen hundred feet higher, on the north bank of the loop, of which the principal ones are Red Hill on the west, and Grobler's Kloof, whose steep slopes are towards the river; smaller hills lie closer to the bank, among which the most important takes its name from Fort Wylie, to the east of the railway, while across the river, still further east, they occupied the lofty hill of Hlangwane. The centre of their position was at Fort Wylie, where they had, from their trenches, a triple tier of fire, and across the railway the small hills by the bank were heavily entrenched, forming, with Fort Wylie, a kind of amphitheatre around the railway bridge near Colenso.

Their position somewhat resembled a fortress on the coast, where a wide circle of batteries on high ground in rear command every landing-place or approach to the main infantry position in front.

The British artillery was compelled to come into action on low ground commanded by the enemy, and was, as will be seen, enticed into a position commanded on three sides by hidden lines of rifle trenches within effective range.

Moreover, the silence of the Boers on the 13th and 14th led to an idea that they would not dispute the passage, and, in consequence, on the 15th there was no preliminary bombardment to prepare for the infantry attack.

Their guns, therefore, remained masked until Sir Redvers Buller was too far committed to his advance

to alter his arrangements, or to withdraw without heavy loss.

Advancing over low ground in full view of the hidden enemy and of their long-range guns of position, the attacking forces were outmatched from the very beginning by the greatly inferior force against them.

This force has been variously stated; its commander, Louis Botha, probably did not include every kind of gun when he said he had but five guns in all; either the supporting guns of position or the machine-guns in the trenches were omitted. British accounts gave the numbers as thirteen thousand with ten guns, but this number of men is probably greatly in excess of the truth.

Sir Redvers Buller issued detailed orders through General Clery, under which General Hart's Brigade was to force a passage by the drift immediately to the west of Dornkop Spruit, General Hildyard's to advance along the main road from Frere on the old bridge west of Colenso, and General Lyttelton's to remain in the centre to support either of them.

On the right Lord Dundonald, with one thousand mounted men and the 7th Battery R.F.A., was, if possible, to seize Hlangwane Height, so as to enfilade the Boer positions around Colenso, which were to be captured by General Hildyard, supported on the left bank by General Hart.

General Barton's Brigade, covering the right to the east of the railway, was to support, *if necessary*, *either* General Hildyard *or* Lord Dundonald.

Here we have what seems the weak point in these orders. Hlangwane, commanding the whole of the

Boers' forward positions, was the key by which alone the passage of the Tugela at this part could be secured. Its possession was therefore essential to success.

Sir Redvers Buller intended to cross first at the bridle drift. The Boers, however, by means of a dam below the drift, had deepened the water and made it impassable. General Hart, at first in mass of quarter-column, and then with his battalions deployed, was pushing on into a salient loop of the river to his right front, when General Buller sent him orders to withdraw his brigade. He was, however, by this time heavily engaged; the 1st Dublin Fusiliers and the 1st Connaught Rangers, advancing under a heavy fire from the front and left, lost heavily, while the 73rd and 64th Field Batteries on the spur to the left of Dornkop Spruit were unable to silence the Boer 40-pounder on the Red Hill, or the other gun on Grobler's Kloof. The loss of the Irish Brigade amounted to five hundred and twenty-three killed and wounded.

A third gun at a shorter range gave additional trouble, and the Naval Brigade, which alone could have silenced these guns, was fully occupied in silencing Fort Wylie. This fort was silenced about 5.30 A.M., but the Boers reoccupied it very soon, and with their triple tier of fire caused heavy loss to Colonel Long's command at 6 A.M.

Two battalions of General Lyttelton's Brigade were sent to General Hart's assistance, and after covering his retreat were obliged themselves to retire under an extremely heavy fire across an open space more than five hundred yards deep.

In the meantime Colonel Long, C.R.A., who had with him the 14th and 66th Batteries R.F.A., as well as the six naval 12-pounders and the two 4·7-inch guns, had received orders to come into action covered by General Barton's Brigade, and to advance under his protection to a point east of the railway, from which he could prepare the way for the 2nd Brigade (General Hildyard). However, he led his two field batteries to the front, far in advance of the 6th Brigade.

About 6 A.M., as the guns were in column of route about four hundred and fifty yards north of Colenso station, Colonel Long directed his two batteries to come into action just in front of a deep donga running at right angles to the railway across their front. The skirmishers in front had just reached a line of trees in company with some artillery scouts. The position was about twelve hundred yards from Fort Wylie, at most six hundred from the river, and more than seventeen hundred and fifty yards in front of the supporting infantry.

No sooner was the order given to unlimber than a cannon-shot from the hills to the north of Colenso was a signal to the Boers under Commandant Pretorius, and immediately Fort Wylie, all the kopjes north of the river, and the trenches constructed along the bank and occupied by the Ermelo commando burst into fire directed on the two batteries.

The naval battery was at that moment engaged in crossing a smaller donga about four hundred yards in rear, and the two last guns, not having crossed, took ground to the left, and at once opened fire on Fort Wylie, while the two front guns, which had cleared

the donga, did the same; the two centre guns were with difficulty extricated from the donga, and came into action to the rear of it. The native drivers had fled as soon as the Boers opened fire, and the rifle and shell fire was so severe that the ammunition-wagons could not be got out of the donga. Meantime the two field batteries, exposed to fire from concealed rifle-pits at from three hundred to six hundred yards on three sides of them, were losing men and horses every minute. Colonel Long was very severely wounded, and Lieutenant-Colonel Hunt was also wounded. The guns were served with the utmost bravery, wounded men being replaced as far as possible by others from the rear; one gun of the 14th Battery was at last served by two men only, one laying and the other loading. These two were struck down at the same moment, and the gun remained without a single man.

About 6.40 A.M. both batteries were silenced, their ammunition being exhausted, and by this time the fire from Fort Wylie slackened considerably. Captain Herbert, Colonel Long's adjutant, who had two horses killed under him, and was one of the few officers unwounded, went to the rear to ask for reinforcements.

At this moment Sir Redvers Buller rode up to Lieutenant Ogilvy, R.N., commanding the naval guns, and ordered the guns and wagons to be withdrawn if possible.

Desperate attempts were made by Captain Congreve of the Rifle Brigade, Captain Schofield, Lieutenant Roberts (the only son of Lord Roberts), and Corporal Nurse, R.F.A., to rescue the guns, but only two guns could be brought away. Captain Congreve,

seeing Lieutenant Roberts fall, as it proved, mortally wounded, returned again and brought him in. The 7th Battery R.F.A., which had supported Lord Dundonald's attack on Hlangwane Height, had turned four guns on the position in front of Colenso, and Captain Reed, of this battery, brought three teams to the assistance of the 14th and 66th Batteries. He, however, only got half-way to the guns, being wounded himself, with five others of the thirteen men with him; another man was killed, also thirteen of the twenty-one horses. Sir Redvers Buller recommended Captain Congreve, R.B., with Captain Reed, Lieutenant Roberts, and Corporal Nurse of the R.F.A. for the Victoria Cross, while Captain Schofield, his A.D.C., who had acted under orders, was very specially mentioned for his most gallant conduct.

The main attack on Colenso Bridge, under General Hildyard, had now developed; the 2nd West Surrey, followed by the 2nd Devons, advanced across the open ground under a heavy cannonade as steadily as if they were marching past at Aldershot. As soon as they got near Colenso they became exposed to rifle-fire from trenches by the river; they continued, however, to advance, and even found shelter in one of the Boer trenches. The want of artillery to support the attack was, however, fatal to its success, and about 9.30 A.M. General Buller was slightly wounded by a shell, and General Clery more severely by a Mauser bullet. Lieutenant-Colonel Bullock, of the 2nd Devons, had been detached with two companies in support of the 14th Battery, and as he did not get the orders to retreat, remained defending the wounded until night-

fall, and only then surrendered when the Boers threatened to shoot the wounded.

Lord Dundonald had carried on his attack on the right with conspicuous gallantry and but little support, but about midday Sir Redvers Buller, seeing that he could not secure the passage without artillery, directed a general withdrawal on the camp at Chieveley.

The day was intensely hot, but the withdrawal was effected in good order, although the loss at first was heavy.

The English losses were returned as follows:—

	Killed.	Wounded.	Missing.
Officers, . .	7	43	21
Men, . . .	125	722	207

Grand total *hors de combat*—71 officers and 1054 men—about seven per cent. of the number engaged. The 14th and 66th Batteries together lost two officers killed, two wounded, and five taken prisoners; eight gunners killed, eighteen wounded, and sixty-four prisoners.

The Boers do not admit of a greater loss than thirty men killed and wounded. On the following day, 16th December, an armistice was concluded for the burial of the dead, and during the night the English camp was removed about a mile further south.

From this time to the end of the year the English in Natal were obliged to remain almost inactive and await reinforcements. We have seen that this was also the case both in Cape Colony and before Kimberley.

With the appointment of Lord Roberts as Com-

mander-in-Chief in South Africa on the 19th December 1899, the arrival of Sir Charles Warren with the 5th Division, the embarkation of the 6th Division under General Kelly-Kenny (which commenced on the day after the battle of Colenso), and the mobilisation of the 7th Division ordered on the 15th December, the first part of the South African War, overshadowed by the defeats of the 10th, 11th, and 15th December, may be said to have ended.

The year 1899 did not, however, close without a manifestation to the world of the unity and indomitable spirit of the British Empire. From every Colony loyal and undaunted cablegrams poured in to the Government; offers of assistance in men and money, which had at first apparently only embarrassed the War Office, now expressed the general assurance that the Government would be supported in seeing the matter through, and, as such, were gladly accepted.

The year 1900 has already proved the great material, as well as moral, value of this assistance against an enemy, the essence of whose fighting power consists in the mobility not only of their infantry, but of their artillery.

But it is worth while to consider shortly not only the relative situation of the combatants, but their losses in action during the year 1899. At the end of that year the number of those on the sick-list from other causes amounted on the British side to about five thousand three hundred, but among their enemies there could not have been one-tenth of that number.

The Boers had, in the field fifty thousand men, and their total losses in action are calculated at about

two thousand, or four per cent. of the whole, including prisoners. The British, according to Lieutenant-Colonel Brunker, had seventy-eight thousand five hundred regular troops (under commissioned ranks) and about six thousand auxiliaries, with one hundred and seventy-four guns. The number of officers was two thousand three hundred and fifty-eight, in addition.

Of this large force, however, we must reckon

10,000 on line of communications,
4,000 in the smaller garrisons or depôts,
14,000 in Ladysmith, Kimberley, and Mafeking,
8,400 in hospital,

or 36,400 not with the field army in the front.

I calculate the latter, at the end of 1899, as forty-eight thousand of all ranks, including auxiliaries, and the losses in action as follows:—

	Killed.	Wounded.	Prisoners.
Officers, . .	60	205	103
Rank and File, .	604	2869	2231

or a total of 6072 *hors de combat*, without counting the sick from other causes than wounds.

This gives a percentage on the field army of 12·65 of all ranks, including prisoners, and of 7·9 for killed and wounded, and on the total under arms of 7·5 of all ranks, including prisoners.

The percentage of total loss for officers in the field army amounted to 19·6, including prisoners, and 13·95 from the effects of fire only; the relative percentages for men were 12·9 and 7·5.

In these calculations the beleaguered garrisons are not included at all.

The relative loss of officers in the early period of the war, as compared with that of their men, is very instructive, and will certainly influence the dress regulations of the future.

Marksmanship is proved in our two Boer wars to be of the greatest possible value, and this is so partly because it at present enables the side that possesses it to cripple their enemy by decimating their leaders; so that at Majesfontein a staff-officer sent to the Highland Brigade with an order at 2.30 P.M. reported that he could not find an officer—they had lost so many, and those that remained, carrying rifles, were not to be distinguished in the confusion from the rank and file.

After the 15th December we find the Boers still closely investing the three garrisons, while their field armies were engaged in fortifying and strengthening their positions against the British field armies, all three of which had been defeated and forced to await reinforcements. Two of these, at Modder River and Sterkstroom, were in part at least greatly disheartened and partly demoralised.

We also find the Boers, though not seizing the occasion to inflict further disaster if possible on the armies opposed to them, yet actively engaged in promoting disaffection among their kinsmen in Cape Colony, largely recruiting their own forces from the Cape Dutch in their neighbourhood, dispossessing loyal officials and establishing those who would help them with means, provisions, and influence, as well as information. After the battle of Modder River the Boer

leaders for the first time began to believe in their own ultimate success. They had proclaimed the annexation of large tracts of British territory in Natal and Cape Colony, and, ever since November 28, while holding their own supremacy clearly in view, they had even formulated conditions of peace that they could accept, which included, besides the admission of their absolute independence as sovereign republics, the payment of a large indemnity, and the cession of considerable territory, which would give them the much-coveted access to the sea.

Their rulers clearly saw that without this last their nation could not prosper, as it must, ultimately, be commercially strangled by the British power, which would possess or control every seaport and available route for either their exports or their imports.

On their part the British Government rose to the occasion, the mobilisation of the 8th Division was anticipated. Hector Macdonald, whose conduct of a black brigade at Omdurman had not only crowned Lord Kitchener's tactics with success, but had also shown what could be done with the men that the latter, while yet a captain of Engineers, had been greatly instrumental in converting from the fellaheen who fled in 1882 into the brave men who, under British leading, have astonished the world with their soldierly qualities and success—Hector Macdonald, almost as much beloved as a Highlander as Wauchope was as a Scotsman, was ordered from India to command the Highland Brigade. General Tucker, the strictest disciplinarian in the army, also commanding in India, was given the 7th Division. He had already commanded the

80th Regiment in the Zulu War with marked success. All the sections of reservists not yet called out were placed under orders, while the applications of some of the smartest militia regiments to serve their country, whether at the front, in the Mediterranean, or in garrisons at home, and of the Volunteers to be allowed to send a company of picked shots and a Maxim detachment each to the regular regiment to which they were affiliated, were all acceded to.

Not only this. The need of a mobile force in South Africa produced two thousand mounted men from New Zealand, larger numbers from Australia, Canada, Natal, and Cape Colony, others from India and Ceylon, while at home the Imperial Yeomanry and the London City Imperial Volunteers were formed, equipped, and in many cases despatched to the front without cost to the Government.

People at home came forward with money and supplies of all kinds for the front; for widows and orphans of those killed; for the support of those temporarily left as such at home; for the provision and equipment of base hospitals, field hospitals, hospital trains, and hospital ships, so that no comfort should be lacking to those, whether friend or foe, who needed medical assistance.

The greatest surgeons volunteered their services, and men of all ranks were not found wanting to give up lucrative home appointments to do their part, according to their abilities, in South Africa.

Meantime the authorities and those soldiers of every description who were left at home were determined that the summer of 1900 should show to Europe that,

even apart from its great naval force, England was not stripped of its means of defence, that its ports and coasts and capital were not, as was said abroad, at the mercy of any enemy who could effect a landing.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

CHAPTER VIII

1900: FIGHTING ROUND SPION KOP

SIR REDVERS BULLER now awaited artillery reinforcements, which had been ordered the day the news of his defeat reached England. He allotted the 2nd and 6th Brigades, the mounted infantry, three regiments of cavalry, and two batteries R.A., with the Naval Brigade, to the advanced camp at Chieveley, under General Sir Francis Clery, as a guard, while he collected and trained the remainder of his forces at Frere Camp. The bulk of the 5th Division reaching Cape Town between 20th and 26th December, under General Warren, and leaving there only two regiments, proceeded to Durban direct, and concentrated at Estcourt, forming a third camp in rear. At the commencement of 1900 Sir Redvers Buller could dispose of—

22 battalions of infantry.
3 regiments of cavalry.
9 batteries R.F.A. (54 guns).
1 battery of howitzers (4 guns).
14 naval guns of different calibres.
1 mountain battery (6 guns).

2 field companies R.E. (17th and 37th).
1 detachment of A Troop R.E. (the Bridging Battalion).
1 section of C Troop (Telegraph Battalion).
1 balloon section.
And last, but not least important, some 5000 irregular horse.

These last, who had been somewhat tardily permitted to enrol themselves in South Africa, were made up as follows:—

Natal Carabineers	465
Natal Mounted Rifles	200
Border Mounted Rifles	270
Umvoti Mounted Rifles	130
Natal Royal Rifles	145
Natal Naval Volunteers	150
Natal Field Artillery	120
Natal Mounted Police	300
Durban Light Infantry	400
Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry	500
Bethune's Mounted Infantry	500
Imperial Light Infantry	1000
1st Regiment South African Light Horse	500
The Imperial Light Horse	100
1st Section Colonial Scouts	500
Grand total	5280

This would give about 5000 effective mounted troops, and there were in addition:—

The 1st Section Stretcher Bearers	1000
The 2nd Section Stretcher Bearers	600
More Natal Mounted Police (in Ladysmith)	340
Imperial Light Horse (in Ladysmith)	500
Natal Carabineers (in Ladysmith)	500
	or 2940

making a gross total of 8220 men raised and equipped in the Colony.

Sir Redvers Buller had thus under his hand about twenty-six thousand troops, and employing the cavalry and mounted infantry in strong patrols to watch and check the constant incursions of the now confident Boer forces, he continually exercised the remainder, so as to resume the offensive as soon as the arrival of artillery would permit him to do so.

His mounted troops covered the front from Springfield on his left to Weenen on his right. The Boers were very enterprising, and were more successful in surprising outposts of regular cavalry than in catching the irregular horse napping. Communication by heliograph had been established with Ladysmith from Mount Umkolumba (five thousand and nine feet high), near Weenen, where for seven weeks Captain Cayzer remained with only a detachment of signallers, transmitting over forty-one thousand words, but in no small risk from the advanced parties of Boers.

On the 6th January Sir Redvers Buller was by this means informed of the great attack made by the besiegers on Ladysmith, and at 2 P.M. he alarmed the whole camp at Chieveley. General Clery's division,

with their artillery, marched out against Colenso and the Boer lines between Fort Wylie and Hlangwane Height. They could not, however, draw more than a few shots from Colenso, and retired before dusk towards their camp.

Every day the British naval guns, having a longer range than those of the R.F.A., shelled the Boer trenches; but these latter had now been deepened and improved, so as to form absolutely a covered way for their defenders, and little if any damage was done to them, even by the lyddite shells.

Sir Redvers Buller directed his reconnaissances chiefly towards Springfield, and the Boers, dreading an attack in this quarter, made Robinson's Drift impassable by a barbed-wire entanglement under water. They also established two of the R.F.A. guns taken at Colenso, to command Potgieter's Drift, and entrenched several commandoes to defend the various passages on the Upper Tugela, and at the junction of the Little Tugela with it. They evidently anticipated Sir Redvers Buller's next attack on their right flank; and it is remarkable how, in every part of South Africa, they were informed at an early date of the plans and intentions of their enemies. It is known that they made free use of almost unlimited secret service money, whereas our Intelligence was barely provided with any.

At this time, after their defeat at Ladysmith, on January 6th, they left only about six thousand men round the town, but placed fourteen thousand along the Tugela, which the January rains had already flooded. The high ground near Spearman's Farm

between the Little and the Upper Tugela rivers had been occupied in force up to this as a camp of exercise, from which rifle practice in the Swiss fashion was carried on against head-and-shoulder targets, representing an attacking enemy in extended order. But as the river commenced to rise, having no bridging material and fearing to be cut off, the Boers withdrew by Trichardt's, Potgieter's, and Skiet's Drifts to the north bank, where they occupied themselves in entrenching positions commanding every approach from Springfield to Ladysmith.

They had also some eight hundred men at Helpmakaar, and one thousand on their Swaziland border, one thousand on that of Zululand, one thousand at Komati Poort, two thousand on the Rhodesian frontier, as well as two thousand facing Tuli, six thousand besieging Mafeking and Kimberley, and a field army of six thousand more under Cronje.

This accounts for nearly forty thousand men; and there were at this time, according to their commissariat returns, seven thousand more round Colesberg, four thousand round Stormberg, five thousand Cape rebels, also in those parts, and two thousand Hollanders guarding the railways. Of Natal rebels they had only enrolled three hundred and thirty-one, which was a great disappointment; but the gross total of all ranks and descriptions reached sixty-one thousand men in January 1900.

On January 9th Sir Redvers Buller brought up the Headquarters of the 5th Division, with the 11th Brigade and half of the 4th Brigade only, from Estcourt to Frere, marching on each side of the railway, by the

direct road and by Ennersdale. The rains had already made the roads very heavy, and all the streams were much swollen; so that in one case the construction of a bridge delayed the column for four hours, and the whole journey extended over twelve hours. Moreover, on this particular day it rained almost incessantly.

The next morning Lord Dundonald started from Chieveley with his brigade to secure Springfield Bridge and Spearman's Farm. He had under him one thousand mounted infantry, the Composite Household Regiment, three squadrons of South African Horse, and the 64th Battery R.F.A., in all, some two thousand men.

Sir Redvers Buller had on the previous day published a General Order, in which he informed his troops that they were going to relieve Ladysmith, and that there was to be 'no turning back.' The spirit that animated all the troops was the best possible, and they believed in their leader as a typical English general. Foreigners would have also said 'a typical John Bull.' Leaving three hundred men and two guns to guard Springfield Bridge, a most important point, and being informed that the Boers had retired across the Tugela, he bivouacked for the night on the heights to the south of Potgieter's Drift, nine miles from Springfield, and occupied Spearman's Farm without any opposition. The next day Lieutenant Carlyle and six men of the South African Force volunteered to swim the Tugela, about sixty yards of rapid stream, and bring back a ferry-boat moored to the north bank. The Boers at less than four hundred yards from the bank perceived their action, and kept up a hot fire; neverthe-

less, with only one man wounded, they most gallantly succeeded in their object. General Louis Botha continued to mass his men on his right, and assembled nearly ten thousand men to oppose the passage of the river, and the advance against Ladysmith.

On January 10th the 5th Division, preceded by Hart's Brigade (5th), marched from Frere to Pretorius's Farm, some six and a half miles short of Springfield; but the roads were the worst possible, and the troops were allowed to rest for eighteen hours and refresh themselves with the farm produce. Next day they reached Springfield and encamped on France's Farm, from which Lyttelton's Brigade (4th) was sent on January 12th to connect with Dundonald at Spearman's Farm.

General Hildyard, with the 2nd Brigade, leaving Chieveley on the 11th, bivouacked that night at Pretorius's Farm, where the two naval 4·7 guns and the six 12-pounders joined him the next day, after a most laborious march, during which their eight spans of oxen to each wagon had had to be increased in some places to four times that number. Each 4·7 gun was dismounted and carried on an eight-span wagon, its carriage on another. A convoy of six hundred and fifty ox-wagons, carrying seventeen days' rations, began to reach Springfield by the 14th, and on the previous day General Hildyard broke up his camp at Pretorius's Farm and arrived at Springfield, while the naval guns were sent to Spearman's Farm, which became the main camp. Zwart's Kop, commanding Potgieter's and Skiet's Drifts, to the north-west and east respectively, was entrenched by Lyttelton's

Brigade (4th) on the 14th and 15th, while General Barton was left in command at Chieveley, with orders to occupy the Boers in his front, defend the passage at Colenso, and, as far as possible, prevent reinforcements going to the Boer right! The main camp at Frere, strongly entrenched, was guarded by one battalion, of the composite force sent to reinforce the units inside Ladysmith.

Twenty-five miles only had been achieved by the main body in five days; but the troops were full of confidence, and even wagered two to one that Ladysmith would be relieved by the 19th of January. This confidence appears to have been shared by their leader, for on the 15th Sir Charles Warren received secret instructions from Sir Redvers Buller, giving him the command of all the troops, except Lyttelton's Brigade, directing him to cross the Tugela by Trichardt's Drift, and recommending him, 'by refusing his right' (namely, Spion Kop), to advance up the Acton Homes road so as to 'gain the open plain north of Spion Kop,' the great hill that dominated the Boer position.

This move was to commence as soon as all the supplies, including seventeen days' rations, had reached Spearman's Hill, and General Coke's two battalions, less two companies left at Springfield Bridge, had also joined him. The despatch of Sir Charles Warren alone gives these instructions, but the covering one by Lord Roberts ('recommended if not prescribed') shows that the 'recommendation' was considered as equivalent to a 'direction,' as will be seen in Appendix E.

Sir Charles Warren's force was to take with it four days' rations, and having gained the north of Spion Kop,

was to join hands with Sir Redvers Buller's column, presumably Lyttelton's Brigade and some irregular horse or mounted infantry, opposite Potgieter's Drift.

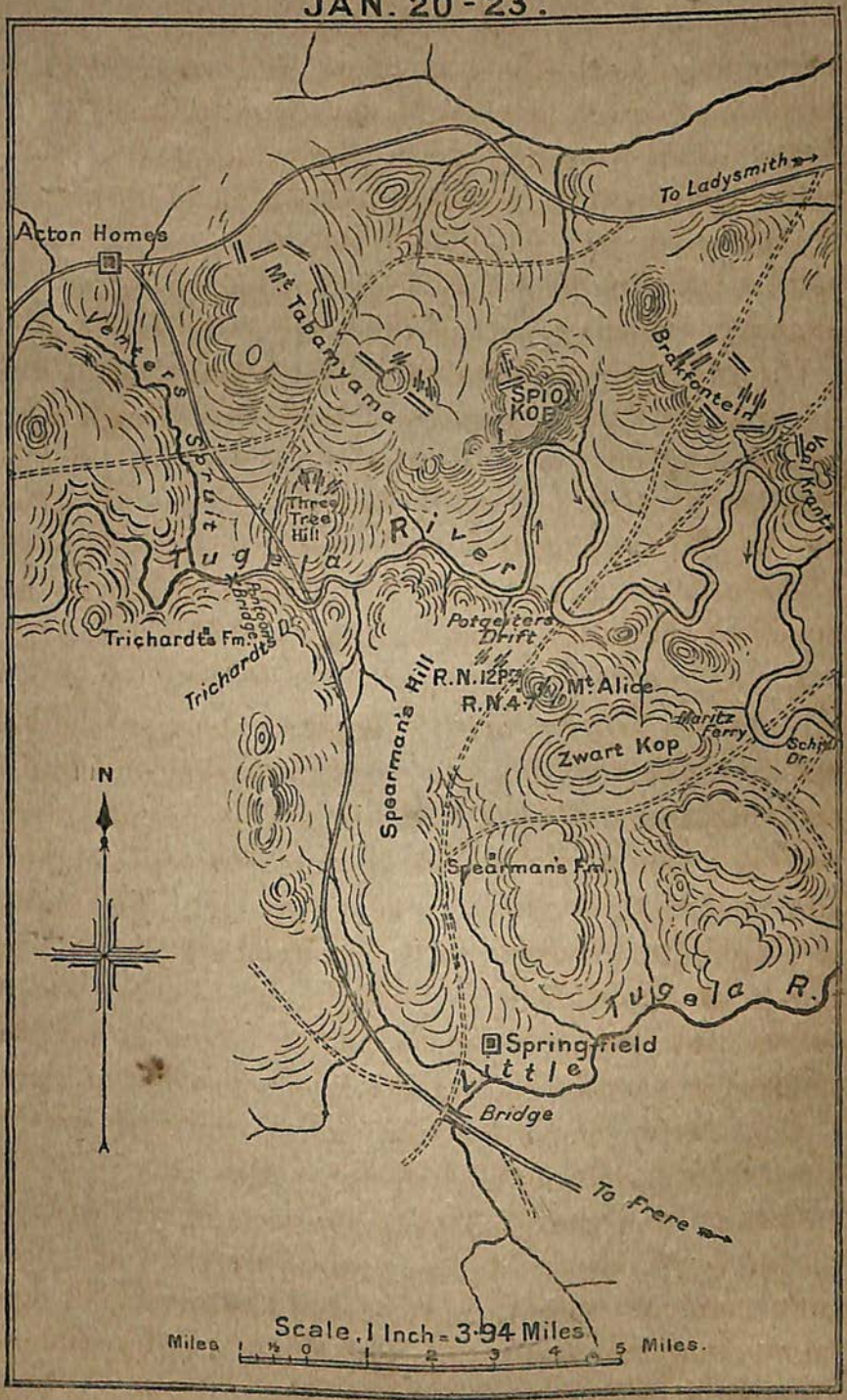
The exact wording of these instructions is of the utmost importance in the consideration of the events of the next few days, but they are only given in some detail by Sir Charles Warren's despatch of 29th January, and his report of the same date as quoted.

On the 15th communication with Ladysmith, from Spearman's Camp, was established by two different routes, and on the 16th all the supplies had reached Spearman's Hill. General Coke arrived the same day, and in the evening the whole force, under Sir Charles Warren, made a night march on Trichardt's Drift, and occupied the hills on the south bank of the river.

In his report on the operations against Spion Kop Sir Charles Warren says: 'Under the original instructions of the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the 15th January 1900, I was to act as circumstances required, but according to instructions was generally to continue throughout, refusing my right, and throwing my left forward until I gained the open plain north of Spion Kop.' In other words, he was to follow the Acton Homes road up Venter's Spruit unless circumstances, *i.e.* the Boers, prevented him.

Considering these instructions on the map, we find that from Trichardt's Drift by Acton Homes to the junction with the road from Three Tree Hill to Ladysmith, north-east of Spion Kop, is by road seventeen miles, and any operations to enable Lyttelton's Brigade to advance across Brakfontein Ridge must commence from that junction.

SKETCH OF SPION KOP POSITION JAN. 20 - 23.



For the first seven of these miles, as far as Acton Homes, the road is commanded all the way by the heights on the right of it, from Three Tree Hill to Mount Tabamyama; the latter was strongly entrenched, on a line leading from Spion Kop north-west, nearly to the Acton Homes-Ladysmith road, where the trenches were run west for a mile and a half towards Acton Homes, and then thrown back a mile across the road from that place to Ladysmith.

Movement to the left is prevented first by the Tugela, and secondly by Venter's Spruit.

We have seen that the troops with a convoy of six hundred and fifty ox-wagons took five days to cover twenty-five miles in reaching Spearman's Hill when unopposed by the Boers.

It does not appear how long Sir Redvers Buller calculated it would take Sir Charles Warren's force to turn the Boers' right flank, and join hands with him by Potgieter's Drift, but it is evident, by his covering despatch from Spearman's Hill on the 30th January, that Sir Charles Warren had been told that 'transport for three and a half days would be a sufficient burden for him, and that I would keep him filled up as he wanted it.'

From this it may be inferred that Sir Charles Warren was expected to remain in command of the road to Acton Homes as he advanced, and, therefore, that he would dislodge the Boers from the heights on his right; but it will be seen that this is inconsistent with his instructions to 'proceed forward, refusing my right,' as stated in his despatch to the Chief of the Staff of 29th January.

In considering his action on the 19th this must be borne in mind.

On the 16th January Sir Redvers Buller had posted the two 4·7-inch naval guns on Mount Alice, and the six 12-pounders on Spearman's Hill, overlooking Potgieter's Drift. He had also the 61st (Howitzer) Battery, Lyttelton's Brigade, and part of Bethune's Mounted Infantry. General Coke's two battalions occupied Swart Kop with the 64th Battery R.F.A., and some mounted infantry watching Skiet's Drift. At 2 P.M. the naval guns opened fire on the Boers at Spion Kop and Brakfontein, while Lyttelton's Brigade approached Potgieter's Drift. The pont there, which carried half a company at once, was out of order, and not available till 6 P.M.; but by linking hands the first companies of the Scottish Rifles and the Rifle Brigade forded the river, running four feet deep at this point, and forming for attack on the north bank, they occupied, without opposition, three small kopjes known as One Tree Hill.

By nightfall half the brigade had crossed, and were established within two miles of the Boer trenches. Lighting fires on the south slope, they occupied themselves in drying their clothes. The remainder of the brigade and the howitzer battery crossed by the pont the next morning. The Boers having put their horses in the most sheltered positions, spent the day improving their positions, being considerably reinforced from their left flank near Colenso.

At 5.30 A.M. on the 17th the naval guns reopened on the Boer trenches, and although they did not reply, the Boer loss was more serious than it had been at

Colenso, the trenches being less concealed. At 8 A.M. Sir Charles Warren's six batteries opened fire, and silenced the fire from a farm north-west of the crossing, and four hundred yards only from the bank. The R.E. threw a pontoon bridge across the stream above Trichardt's Drift. In spite of some opposition from the Boer outposts this was completed by 9.30 A.M., and the 11th Brigade (Woodgate) immediately crossed the stream, which is about fifty yards wide at this point.

During the day the rest of Sir Charles Warren's force crossed, partly by the bridge, partly by the ponts, and, moving off to their left, occupied the heights commanding the drift. Mount Tabamyama and Spion Kop are united by a nek crossed by the Fair View road to Ladysmith. The lower slopes on the southern sides are steep and broken by ravines, the upper ones are more even; and the slopes on the north-east towards Ladysmith are quite easy. The Boers did not oppose the British advance on the lower slopes, and the R.F.A. took up a position near Wright's Farm, north of the drift, and opened fire on Spion Kop.

Sir Redvers Buller was present with Woodgate's Brigade during part of the day, but did not assume the command, which he left to Sir Charles Warren, whose Headquarters were moved across the river at 3.15 A.M. on the 18th. All that day the waggons were being brought across the Tugela under cover of the infantry and artillery, and thus the turning movement failed to take the Boers by surprise, as had been intended.

Lord Dundonald, crossing on the 17th, immediately pushed up the Acton Homes road, and sent forward Major Mackenzie with one hundred and forty men of

the Natal Carabineers and Imperial Light Horse to secure the height commanding the highroad to Ladysmith. This party pushed forward at the gallop, and had hardly occupied the desired point when they perceived a commando of three hundred Boers advancing from Tabamyama with the same object, and not suspecting their presence. Firing a volley at short range, Major Mackenzie drove back this force with a loss of some forty Boers, including thirty-one prisoners. The Boers represented that they had been attacked by two thousand horsemen with Maxims. Lord Dundonald then arrived and occupied the pass with his whole force, intending to await the arrival of Sir Charles Warren, and being reinforced by a detachment of the 1st Dragoons. On the 18th also, under cover of the naval guns, Sir Redvers Buller made a demonstration against Brakfontein, hoping to unmask the Boer trenches. Lyttelton's Brigade advanced within one thousand yards of them, but the Boers refused to make a sign or fire a shot; the English, therefore, fearing an ambush, and not being strong enough for a general engagement, withdrew to One Tree Hill without attaining their object. They had sent up their balloon at 7 A.M., and whatever information was obtained during the day was got by its means.

It appears that the road to Acton Homes was either defiladed from or out of range of the Boer trenches, as both Lord Dundonald's force and his reinforcement passed along it unmolested. Sir Charles Warren's left was pushed along it to Venter's Laager, but his right in covering Trichardt's Drift was already committed to the lower slopes leading to Spion Kop, while the

guns were in action near Wright's Farm in the centre, on Three Tree Hill.

According to instructions, on the night of the 18th, refusing his right, Sir Charles Warren should have pushed on to join Lord Dundonald. Instead of doing so he decided against using the Acton Homes road at all, and determined to take the Fair View-Rosalie road, after first taking Spion Kop, the key and centre of the Boer position. Even then it would be necessary to send the wagons back across the Tugela, and to carry three or four days' rations in the men's haversacks, making an attempt to break through the centre of the Boer position in order to assist Sir Redvers Buller in repeating the operation against their left.

On the 19th he sent orders to recall Lord Dundonald, massing all his force at Venter's Spruit, and after an examination of the roads, he assembled all his general and staff officers in the evening, and pointed out that the Acton Homes road was impossible on account of its length, and the other, only possible without impedimenta and after capturing the Boer position, was that by Fair View and Rosalie from Three Tree Hill.[1]

He immediately sent the following telegram to Sir Redvers Buller:—

(Sent 7.54 P.M. Received 8.15 P.M.)

LEFT FLANK, 19*th January*.

To the CHIEF OF THE STAFF.

I find there are only two roads by which we could possibly get from Trichardt's Drift to Potgieter's, on the north of the Tugela, one by Acton Homes, the other by Fair View and Rosalie; the first I reject as too long, the second is a very

[1] Fair View and Rosalie are just N.N.E. of Three Tree Hill, shown too large on p. 183.

difficult road for a large number of wagons, unless the enemy is thoroughly cleared out. I am, therefore, going to adopt some special arrangements, which will involve my stay at Venter's Laager for two or three days. I will send in for further supplies and report progress.—WARREN.

The reply to this was that three days' supply was being sent.

No further report seems to have been sent, but as Sir Redvers Buller was present on the 21st, 22nd, and 23rd, perhaps this is not to be wondered at. The 'special arrangements' reversed the Commander-in-Chief's plan, and clearly included the capture and retention of Spion Kop.

On the following day General Clery, with two brigades (Hart's and Woodgate's) and six batteries, attacked the south-western slopes of Tabamyama at dawn, and succeeded after twelve hours' fighting in establishing himself on the edge of the upper slopes, but in a perilous position, as the broken and almost precipitous ground behind him rendered either support or retreat a most difficult matter. The Boers were found to be strongly entrenched at the rear of the upper slopes, which formed a glacis in front of them, being more regular and much less steep.

Foreign critics are of opinion that the march with a convoy along the front of the Boer position was a most hazardous undertaking, but the actual operations against Spion Kop seemed hardly less so, involving a frontal attack on a very strong position, and only to be recommended as bringing the British forces north of the Tugela nearer to one another instead of further apart.

The next two days were occupied in maintaining

the position won on the 20th, and Sir Charles Warren gives the following account in his despatch of the 29th January:—

'8. On the 21st the Boers displayed considerable activity on our left, and the Commander-in-Chief desired me to move two batteries from right to left. At a subsequent date, during the day, I found it impossible to proceed without howitzers, and telegraphed for four from Potgieter's. These arrived early on the morning of the 22nd, and the Commander-in-Chief, arriving about the same time, directed me to place two of these howitzers on the left, two having already been placed on the right flank. I pointed out to the Commander-in-Chief that it would be impossible to get wagons through by the road leading past Fair View, unless we first took Spion Kop, which lies within about two thousand yards of the road. The Commander-in-Chief agreed that Spion Kop would have to be taken. Accordingly, that evening orders were drawn up giving the necessary instructions to General Talbot Coke to take Spion Kop that night, but, owing to an absence of sufficient reconnaissance, he requested that the attack might be put off for a day.

'9. On the 23rd January the Commander-in-Chief came into camp, the attack on Spion Kop was decided upon, and Lieutenant-Colonel à Court, of the Headquarter Staff, was directed by the Commander-in-Chief to accompany General Woodgate, who was detailed to command the attacking column.'

Sir Redvers Buller's despatch of the 30th does not allude to these two days except as follows:—

'I went over to Sir Charles Warren on the 23rd. I

pointed out to him that I had no further report and no intimation of the special arrangements foreshadowed by this telegram of the 19th, that for four days he had kept his men continuously exposed to shell and rifle fire, perched on the edge of an almost precipitous hill, that the position admitted of no second line, and the supports were massed close behind the firing-line in indefensible formations, and that a panic or sudden charge might send the whole lot in disorder down the hill at any moment. I said it was too dangerous a situation to be prolonged, and that he must either attack or I should withdraw his force. I advocated, as I had previously done, an advance from his left. He said that he had the night before ordered General Coke to assault Spion Kop, but the latter had objected to undertaking a night attack on a position the road to which he had not reconnoitred, and added that he intended to assault Spion Kop that night.

'I suggested that as General Coke was still lame from the effects of a lately broken leg, General Woodgate, who had two sound legs, was better adapted for mountain climbing.'

Having given the British official reports on these four days' fighting, it is well to hear what the Boers had to say. Louis Botha, who was in command at Colenso, was about to go to Pretoria on short leave on the evening of the 19th, when he received, about 7 P.M., orders from ex-President Steyn to go at once to the Upper Tugela, and take command over the troops there who were under Generals Schalk Burger and Cronje. Mounting his horse he set off over the mountains, and reached the former's camp at 3 A.M.

The three generals, with their staff and the respective commandants, proceeded to inspect their own position, and that of the English, who were evidently about to attack in force. Wherever the attack was weakest, there the Boers concentrated; as soon as the necessary diversion was effected, they immediately shifted their position. The engagement that ensued was one of the most stubbornly contested of the war, and continued over five days. At first the English attack was entirely directed on the southern slopes of Mount Tabamyama and the plateau joining it to Spion Kop. The defences, which were continually shifted, were formed by *schantzes*, or dry stone walls, rapidly erected from abundant materials. The Boer guns were constantly moved, and rarely fired more than three rounds from the same position.

Five batteries R.F.A. were with considerable difficulty got into position on the top of Three Tree Hill by 7 A.M. on the 20th, and opened fire at two thousand six hundred yards on the Boers, who occupied a semi-circle of heights facing south. General Woodgate's Brigade was divided into two portions; the 1st South Lancashire and the 2nd Lancaster deployed along the chord of the semi-circle to the right of its centre at Three Tree Hill, and by 7.30 had gained a small hill to the east of it. On this hill the Boers directed a heavy fire, and General Woodgate then deployed the other portion (2nd Lancashire Fusiliers and 1st York and Lancaster) to the left of the R.F.A., supported by the whole of Hart's Brigade. These attacked the broken slopes of Tabamyama north-west of Three Tree Hill. The six battalions slowly made good their

advance and reached the steepest part of the slope, where they remained in some degree sheltered from the Boers above. At 11 A.M. they again advanced, and about 3 P.M., taking every advantage of cover, had reached the first top, within one thousand yards of the first Boer line, and there halted, as there was no cover to be obtained in their front. On the left of the 5th Brigade, the 2nd Brigade and Lord Dundonald's mounted troops both covered the flank and took an active part in the attack. It was here that Major Childe, with two squadrons of the South African Light Horse, drove the Boers from the crest of one of the western spurs of Tabamyama to their second line of defence. In leading his men against this Major Childe was killed by a shell; but, nevertheless, the squadrons remained in possession of the spur till the next morning. The English artillery, which had lost in men and horses, and yet seemed unable for more than a few minutes to reduce the Boer fire, now made a special effort to prepare the way for the decisive attack they thought imminent. Shortly after 3 o'clock, for fifteen minutes, the thirty quick-firing guns continued firing four shots in each minute. General Clery, however, decided that the brigade could not, after so many hours' fighting, storm the position that night, and the Lancashire regiments left the spur they were attacking, and retired by the valleys on either side of it. The Boers pursued them with shrapnel from the English guns that had been taken in the battle of Colenso. About 7.30 P.M. the fighting ceased, and General Hildyard's Brigade took the place of General Woodgate's, which had been in action for more than twelve hours.

The troops bivouacked on the slopes, and after a quiet night discovered that the Boer right had been withdrawn from its advanced position to the rear crest of the more even slopes at the top of the ridge. By this means, while retaining their whole field of fire, they had withdrawn out of range of the guns on Three Tree Hill, and were in consequence better able to resist the advance of the British left, which made no progress. The howitzers, having a longer range, were then sent for, and established on the 22nd on the left bank of the Venter Spruit in the plain, two on the left and two on the right.

We find Sir Redvers Buller on the 21st and 22nd ordering guns to the left, while Sir Charles Warren placed others on the right, each having a different object in view. The fire of the artillery was, however, quite unable to give a chance of success to an assault on the Boer lines on the 22nd or 23rd, and on the former day Sir Charles told his chief that it would be necessary to capture Spion Kop on his right front.

As long as this commanding height remained in the hands of the Boers, the positions of Tabamyama and Brakfontein, if taken by the English, could not be held; and for the same reason if Sir Charles Warren could seize it and get his artillery into action from the top, he could enfilade the Boer lines, and they would be forced to retire.

The action of the troops from the 19th to the 23rd was therefore useless, and, however successful, could not have attained the object in view, to clear the way to Ladysmith.

The attack on the Boer right had, however, had the

effect of withdrawing troops from the centre, and Spion Kop had actually been left in charge of a small body of the Vryheid commando only.

Sir Redvers Buller having reluctantly consented to Sir Charles Warren's proposal, the latter ordered General Woodgate to seize the south-west angle of the Spion Kop plateau, which was approached by a steep narrow zigzag path about two miles long.

Accordingly, at 1 A.M. on the 24th, Colonel Thorneycroft, one hundred and ninety-four of his mounted infantry, the 17th Company R.E., the 2nd Lancaster Regiment, and six companies of the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers, advanced in Indian file up the path, taking every precaution not to attract attention. They were supported by two companies of the Connaught Rangers and the Imperial Light Horse, which had crossed Trichardt's Drift on the 23rd only. The whole was under General Woodgate, accompanied by Lieutenant-Colonel à Court as staff officer; the night was dark, and rain fell heavily, changing near the summit to a thick mist. The order was to attack with the bayonet without firing. At 3 A.M. they reached the summit, and were challenged in the mist by the sentry. As ordered, they lay flat on the ground only about thirty yards from the picket of fifteen Boers, who were alarmed by the sentry, and fired their magazines into the mist without hurting any one. They then bolted, except one man, who was bayoneted in the trench as the English, with loud cheers, that could be heard in the camps below, rushed the position. They then stormed a second trench, and by 4 A.M. were masters of the south-west part of Spion Kop with only three men wounded

among them. All the English batteries now opened fire in spite of the heavy mist.

General Woodgate immediately set to work to protect his position by trenches and stone ramparts. Owing to the thick fog, which did not begin to lift until 8 A.M., these were not properly laid out, and were found later to be too far back to command the approaches on the north. This, however, was not known at the time, and General Woodgate despatched Lieutenant-Colonel à Court to report to Sir Charles Warren that he was entrenched, and, he hoped, secure, but that the fog was too thick to permit him to see. This he did before fighting recommenced on the summit. At 4 A.M. General Botha was informed of what had taken place, and resolved, at all costs, to recover the position, of which his troops still held the northern portion. While it was still dark he brought troops from the right and left, and at 8.45 A.M. attacked the occupied spur on two sides. The fog was still so thick that the leading Boers, under Commandant Prinsloo, actually came to a hand-to-hand conflict with the English sentries.

General Lyttelton, in accordance with orders, made an advance at dawn on Brakfontein to create a diversion, but was not strong enough to draw General Botha's forces from their effort to recover Spion Kop.

Their attack was led by three hundred picked men, who succeeded in spite of heavy loss in remaining on the summit. About 8 A.M. the Boer artillery and machine-guns were brought into action, and forced the English to correct their lines, which were in some cases exposed to enfilade. New ramparts had

to be made under a withering fire, and Major Massy, R.E., in setting an example to his men, was here killed. The space was so narrow that the defenders were crowded into it, and the Boers, taking advantage of every boulder, pressed the attack, carried the front trench, were driven out of it again, and, refusing to be denied, forced the English gradually back. Had the latter been able to prepare the hill properly, or had artillery of any kind been on the summit, they could have held their own; but about 9.15 A.M. Sir Redvers Buller, who was watching the fight from the signal-station at Spearman's Hill, saw that our front line was giving way. At the same moment the signallers received from Colonel Crofton, on the hill, the following message for Sir Charles Warren:—'Reinforce at once, or all lost—General dead.' Sir Charles at once ordered Major-General Coke to succeed General Woodgate, taking with him two fresh battalions (the Middlesex and the Dorset), and telegraphed to Colonel Crofton to expect them and hold on to the last.

The Commander-in-Chief, however, seeing Colonel Crofton's message, telegraphed to Sir Charles to appoint Colonel Thorneycroft to command on the summit, and the appointment was duly heliographed up at once. General Coke accordingly, when he reached the summit, found himself superseded by this special appointment, which does not appear to have been made pending his arrival.

About 2 P.M. the Boers, whose attack had somewhat slackened since 11 A.M., strongly engaged the defenders on the south-west corner, and it was at this time that two hundred men, mostly of the Lancashire

Fusiliers, laid down their arms. Several small parties did the same during the afternoon, and had it not been for Colonel Thorneycroft's personal example, there is little doubt that great numbers of the rank and file, separated from their officers, and exposed to a murderous fire in a narrow area in which but few of them could use their rifles, would have surrendered. The fire on the summit was so intense that no message was sent down till late in the afternoon, when General Coke, who had been asked at 1.30 P.M. to report on the situation, reported it was extremely critical, and 'unless the artillery could silence the enemy's guns, the men on the summit could not stand another complete day's shelling' (Sir Charles Warren's report). Sir Charles had repeatedly asked Colonel Thorneycroft to report, but that officer was actually in the fighting-line all day, and probably never got any messages at all. Lord Roberts regrets 'that Sir Charles Warren did not himself visit Spion Kop during the afternoon or evening, knowing as he did that the state of affairs there was very critical'; but it would seem that this very condition made Sir Charles Warren unwilling to put himself out of communication with the defenders during the time necessary to reach the summit. Sandbags had been sent up earlier in the day, and food and ammunition were carried up the path continuously all day. During the afternoon General Lyttelton also was asked to send reinforcements, and despatched the Scottish Rifles, who recrossed Potgieter's Drift and the neck of land forming the loop in the river to the north-west of it, forded the river by a drift used by the natives, and reached the summit on the south-west

towards 5 P.M. with the Imperial Light Infantry sent by Sir Charles Warren. These reinforcements, with General Coke's two battalions, crowded six regiments into a space which had been found only too small for two and a half in the morning. They were so crowded as to get hopelessly mixed up, each company and even each group of men taking whatever shelter they could secure without regard to the rest of their unit. About 5 P.M., however, the Boer fire slackened.

By this time the two naval 12-pounders and the Mountain Battery had arrived from Spearman's Farm, but halted at the foot of the path, thinking they could not make the ascent. General Lyttelton had also sent the 3rd battalion 60th Rifles, under Colonel Buchanan Riddell, after the Scottish Rifles; but this battalion having crossed the native ford followed the left bank of the stream, and ascended the south-east slope of Spion Kop, in spite of every effort made by the Boers. After two hours' struggle they reached the summit of the east spur, and with loud cheers seized this corner of the plateau. Their colonel fell mortally wounded in the attack; but in all the fighting on Spion Kop this was the most daring and successful exploit, and gave Colonel Thorneycroft more assistance than any number of reinforcements, without artillery, could do. It greatly eased the defenders without adding to their difficulties. The battalion maintained its hold of the spur until 8.30 P.M., when they received orders to retreat, and evacuated the position. At sunset Sir Charles 'considered that the position could be held next day provided that guns could be mounted and effective shelter provided'; and later in the evening

he sent his C.R.E., Colonel Sim, with the 37th (Field) Company R.E., two naval 12-pounders, the Mountain Battery R.A., and a large working party (two reliefs of six hundred men each) to the summit to provide the necessary security. Unfortunately, Colonel Thorneycroft does not seem to have been heliographed to earlier to expect these guns, which had been badly wanted all the day, and General Coke does not appear even to have been informed that Colonel Thorneycroft was in command, but when he was himself summoned to Sir Charles Warren thought Colonel Hill, as the senior officer, was in command. Undoubtedly this want of information and proper organisation reacted badly on the defenders, worn out with a long day's fighting in an exposed position, and under a heavy fire, from which they had lost many of their number. General Coke left at 9.30 P.M., without any idea that there would be any question of evacuating the position. Communication (by heliograph) had been, of course, suspended since sunset, and it would seem that Sir Charles Warren might then have started for the summit instead of ordering General Coke to come down. As it was, when fighting ceased, Colonel Thorneycroft found himself unsupported, and quite unable to face another day without shelter or guns. He had no idea that the latter and the working party were on their way, and reasonably supposed that it had not been found possible to get guns to the summit at all. He had done everything a man could do to hold the position, but considered that to remain would only sacrifice the troops on the summit. He accordingly ordered it to be evacuated, in spite of vigorous protests

from Captain Phillips—General Coke's brigade major —the officer commanding the Middlesex Regiment and others. In doing so on his own responsibility, communication being interrupted, 'he exercised a wise discretion' under the circumstances, according to Sir Redvers Buller's despatch. Nevertheless, the evacuation of Spion Kop involved the failure of this attempt to relieve Ladysmith, which had occupied over a fortnight, and had culminated in five days' continuous fighting.

It must not be forgotten that want of water on the summit, where a spring had been thought to exist, greatly added to the trials of the defenders, even when they were a small body, and supplied as far as possible from below; but with six battalions crowded on the summit the supply of water on the second day would have been much more difficult, and the want of it more surely than anything would have added to the demoralisation of the troops.

It must also be remembered that Colonel Thorneycroft had to decide on the spot, without waiting till 2.30 A.M., when communication was re-established. He knew that should he wait till then it would be impossible to evacuate the hill without heavy loss, and he had no reason to think that daybreak would find his tired force any better able to hold the position.

The last troops did not begin to descend until just as dawn was breaking, although the whole retirement had been both orderly and rapid.

When the troops, after evacuating the summit, met Colonel Sim ascending with the guns and the working parties it was too late. Fourteen years before another

Engineer officer had come in sight of Khartoum with twenty-four men of the Sussex Regiment—'too late'; in neither case were *they* to blame, and I do not think that in 1900 any single individual can be held entirely responsible for what was both a grievous failure and a national disappointment.

During the above operations between the 17th and 25th of January the losses on both sides were exceptionally heavy, and amounted on the British side to eighty-seven officers and one thousand six hundred and forty-two men placed *hors de combat*, and accounted for as follows:—

	Killed.	Wounded.	Missing or Captured.	Total.
Officers, .	27	53	7	87
Men, .	246	1056	340	1642
Total, .	273	1109	347	1729

Some weeks after the evacuation of Spion Kop the *Times* sent a special correspondent to visit the scene of the fighting from 17th to 25th January; he relates that although on the actual summit of Spion Kop itself the Boers had only made two small trenches, as they were at this point out of reach of their opponents' fire from below, the rest of their position from Tabamyama to Brakfontein was most carefully and laboriously fortified. There are, on an average, only some twenty-four inches of soil above the rock on these hills, and this was utilised by means of sandbags. The trenches themselves were cut out of the rock, from four to five feet deep, and hollowed out so as to be wider at the foot than at the top. Sandbag loopholes formed the parapets. There were two lines of

trenches connected by covered ways, one along the crest, the other considerably in rear of it, for the supports. The gun-pits were six feet deep, withdrawn in rear of the crest, with a fixed platform, so that the muzzles of the guns just projected above the level of the ground in front. The inner crest was revetted with sandbags, and the emplacements showed no sign of having been damaged by the British artillery fire during the five days' combat.

The south-west spur of Spion Kop summit had a breadth towards the north of perhaps three hundred and ninety yards. During the mist on the morning of the 24th, General Woodgate had made across this one small shallow trench, at most two feet six inches deep, about one hundred yards long, and curved in plan.

Other trenches were made later, but, except two short lengths on the western slope, none of them commanded in any way the approaches to the top of the north-west spur, where was the highest part of the plateau; this could be approached by the Boers in absolute security, and retired from, when necessary, into the same.

Only at one point of the summit did the conformation of the rocks give any natural cover to our troops, and on this point during the whole of the day the Boer artillery kept up a constant fire, at a rate of perhaps ten shots a minute from each gun. As a result, you could not find a space the size of your hand where the ground was not riddled and broken with bullets and shells.

The small available space in rear of the trench was swept by the Boer fire, and early in the afternoon of

the 24th the small trench itself was filled with dead and dying men, so that the supports, in order to find shelter in it, were in some cases obliged to place the corpses on the parapet in front of them.

The difficulty of removing the injured men down the steep path to the ambulances at the foot was very great, and indeed the slightest movement on the summit was certain to attract the attention of the enemy.

Two extracts from letters written by soldiers well illustrate the condition of things on the 24th on the summit of Spion Kop. A private in the Royal Lancaster Regiment wrote:—

'I suppose you have read in the paper about the engagements we were in at Three Tree Hill and Spion Kop. Our regiment lost very heavily, and so did the remaining corps which were in our brigade. We were firing all day and night, and at every possible chance we made a charge, but owing to the enemy's strong position we had to retire. At last the Boers got their big guns in action, and they did considerable damage. First one and then another was hit by stray pieces of the shells which were constantly bursting overhead. One man quite near to me was hit, and died on the spot.

'Then my section commander was shot dead, so I was becoming rather nervous of one landing in my body. Then my chum was lying by my side, when a piece of shell shattered his arm to pieces. About five minutes afterwards a bullet came with a bang, like a house falling upon you, and went clean through my right arm.

'We lost nearly all our officers in that fight, and our general was shot through the head, but I do not know whether he will recover or not.

'Anyway, they do not frighten us with their shells, for the troops, I heard later on, advanced in the midst of it and drove them back.'

A private in the 3rd Battalion King's Royal Rifles described their part in the action as follows:—

'We left Frere camp some three weeks ago, and we have been bivouacking ever since without waterproof sheets, blankets, or anything; so you can understand what I said "as well as can be expected," when I tell you we have had four or five wet days and nights, and have had to wade through rivers, and let our things dry on our backs.

'We had the order to fall in about 11 o'clock on Wednesday morning (24th), and we marched a couple of miles towards the Boers, when we had the order to storm a couple of hills about a mile and a half away. We advanced in skirmishing order, and I don't think I heard a shot fired until we got to the foot of the hills, when we were met by a terrible rifle-fire. I am sending you a rough sketch of the position we had to take, so you will be able to judge for yourself in a slight degree of the difficulty we had in getting to the top. It was almost perpendicular in places, and we could only get up by hanging on to the grass that grew on the side, and all the time we could hear that ping, ping, which seemed never to stop. Do you know it is awfully exciting when you are going up a hill like that. I can't describe the sensation; but it is not at all unpleasant while

it lasts. You never seem to notice the danger. It is only after, when you are picking up the dead and wounded, that you notice it. Well, when I got to the top, I found that we could not advance any further, as the Boers were too strongly entrenched on the other side, so we had to lie down at the top and wait for orders. I suppose we were about four hours getting up, although it did not seem so long as that, but I know we had not been up there an hour when it began to get dark. All the time the bullets kepts whizzing over our heads, and if any one popped their heads over to look down the other side bang would come a bullet, and the man was lucky if he only had his helmet hit. I was with the first dozen on the top, and five of the others were knocked over. Just as it was getting dark, an orderly came up with a message for our colonel, and he stood up for about half a minute to read the note when he fell, shot through the brain. We were all very much upset at him being hit, as he was one of the bravest men who ever lived. I was close to him best part of the way up, and I never saw him make for cover once, although he took good care to see that every one else took advantage of all cover. The next senior officer there, Major Kays, took the note, and gave us orders to retire by twos and threes as soon as it got dark.'

The British losses, amounting, as stated above, to one thousand seven hundred and twenty-nine in all, may be subdivided, to separate the actual fighting on the summit from that of the previous day against Tabamyama, known as the action of Venter Spruit. Five thousand British were engaged on the 24th, and

lost in all one thousand one hundred and sixteen, killed, wounded, and captured, as follows:—

	Killed.	Wounded.	Prisoners.	Total.
Officers,	28	32	6	66
Men,	194	536	320	1050

Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry lost 62 per cent. of their number; the Lancashire Fusiliers 23·6 per cent., or, including prisoners, 49·3 per cent.; Royal Lancaster Regiment 16·2 per cent., or, including prisoners, 23·5 per cent.

General Botha reported a loss of thirty-one killed and one hundred and thirty wounded, but the Boers afterwards admitted their total losses in three days to have been nearly two thousand, and General Buller estimated it as at least equal to his own.

The publication of Lord Roberts' despatch, dated 13th February, including those of Sir Redvers Buller and Sir Charles Warren, dated 29th and 30th January, and received at the War Office on the 9th March, took place after some telegraphic correspondence with Lord Roberts on the 17th April, *vide* Appendices. This has been animadverted on in no measured terms both at home and abroad, and there can be little doubt that the period of uncertainty as to what would be done with the generals commented on cannot have conduced to the efficiency of the army in Natal.

A great German authority, Lieutenant-Colonel von Bieberstein, comments very severely on Sir Charles Warren's conduct. It does not seem that he was in any way bound to go up Spion Kop as long as there was communication by signal with the top; but when sunset put an end to this, the reason he remained

below has yet to be explained. The other main point would seem to be the delay on the evening of the 24th in sending up the guns, sappers, and working parties, who might apparently have started the ascent immediately the sun went down.

Sir Redvers Buller, arriving early on the 25th, at once took the command, and ordered the withdrawal of all his forces across the Tugela once more, excepting Lyttelton's brigade, which occupied the three low hills of Krantz Kloof, across the bend of the river north-east of Potgieter's Drift.

The 5th Division took up a position guarding the drift and pontoon bridge, while the guns (six batteries R.F.A. and four machine guns) first crossed and occupied the southern heights, to perform the same duty in their turn. Then four hundred and eighty-nine wagons of various sizes were put over before midnight on the 26th; by 4 A.M. next day the troops were all on the south side, and by 8 A.M. Major Irvine and the Bridging Battalion, after forty hours' continuous work, during which the chesses of the bridge had been completely worn through, dismantled bridge and withdrew their pontoons. The force was all in camp either at Hatton's Farm, Spearman's Hill, or near Springfield by 10 A.M.

General Buller himself watched the whole of the proceedings; his inscrutable face showed only some signs of fatigue. As soon as his troops were once more safe and under canvas, their spirit unbroken, and their confidence in him undiminished, he recommenced preparations for a third effort that might relieve Ladysmith.

LIB. OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

CHAPTER IX

THE RELIEF OF LADYSMITH

MEANTIME the five thousand Boers, who had been engaged round Spion Kop, also rested and completed additional works to the south and east of that mountain. According to the *Militär Wochenblatt*, whose special correspondent accompanied General Botha's forces, they had four guns on the various summits at the south-east side of Spion Kop, the westernmost a Creusot, then two Krupps, and a Maxim-Nordenfeldt. These were under a retired German officer, ex-Lieutenant Grothaus, who, as we shall see, removed them later to reinforce the left wing at Doorn Kloof, on which rocky and impracticable mountain the Boers afterwards ensconced a 'Long Tom,' also of Creusot origin.

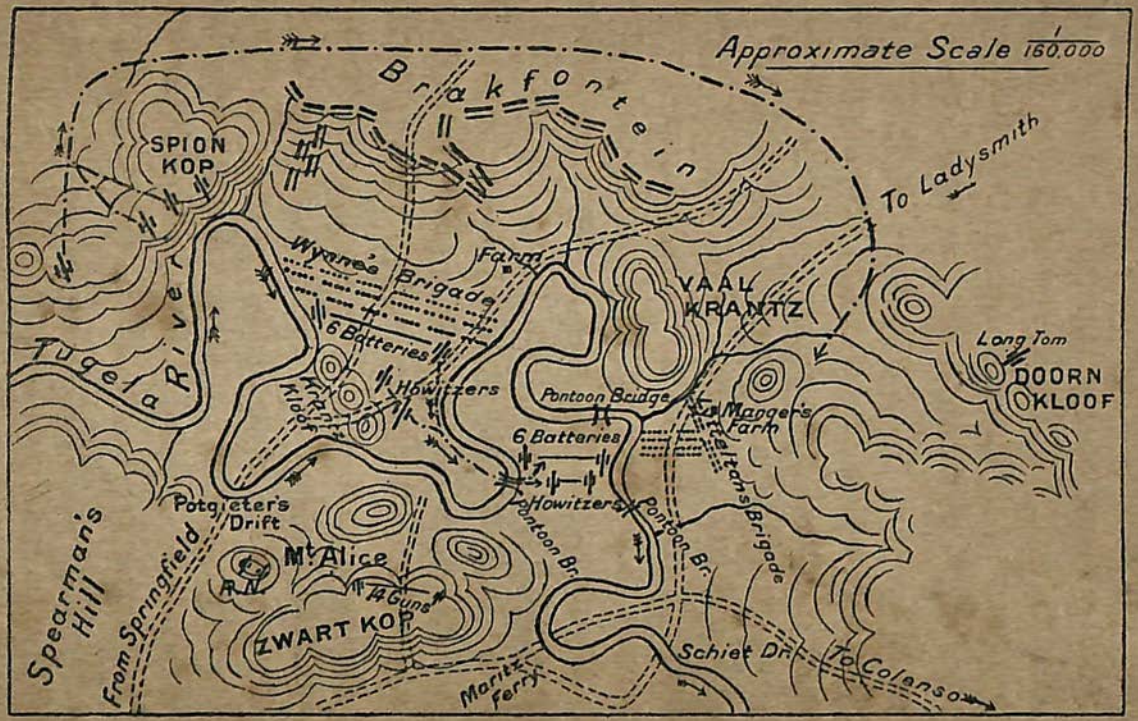
The accompanying sketch illustrates the respective positions of the two combatants. A sector of a circle, whose radius is six and a half miles and chord ten miles, with its centre on Mount Alice, just north of Spearman's Camp, will enclose the whole of both positions, while an inner segment, with a radius of three and a half miles, and measuring four and a half miles long, will include all the British advanced posts.

On the 4th February the Boer lines almost formed a

semicircle, and they had utilised the preceding days to enormously strengthen their positions at Brakfontein and Spion Kop. They had also occupied strongly the deep nullah which cut off Doorn Kloof and the south-east portion of the position. The plateau in front of Krantz Kloof, One Tree Hill, was commanded by them from every direction, and they also occupied the ridge of Vaal Krantz on the south-east side of Brakfontein.

We have seen that on the 14th January the summit of Zwart Kop had been occupied and entrenched by Lyttelton's Brigade, as it commanded both Potgieter's and Skiet's Drifts. At the end of January it was seen to be of the greatest importance to get guns up to this summit to engage the 94-pounder on Doorn Kloof and the Boers on Vaal Krantz. On the south side of it runs a deep valley, with a track to Maritz Ferry, which was improved by the Royal Engineers so as to be practicable for guns; and on the 1st February a short road was made to the north from it to the foot of the steepest part of the escarpment of Zwart Kop. A projecting tree at the top was made use of as a derrick, and with a wire hawser and pulley, and nearly a battalion of infantry, the difficulty was got over, a roadway having been previously made from the foot of the tree to the position desired for the guns.

Lieutenants James and Ogilvy, R.N., whose conduct with the Naval Brigade at the battle of Colenso has already been mentioned, were by this means enabled to occupy the summit with their six 12-pounders, while the 4th Mountain Battery was also brought


Approximate Scale 1/60,000
Brakfontein
SPION KOP
To Ladysmith
Wynne's Brigade
Farm
VAAL KRANTZ
Tugela River
6 Batteries
Long Tom
DOORN KLOOF
Howitzers
Pontoon Bridge
Manger's Farm
6 Batteries
Potgieter's Drift
Howitzers
Pontoon Br.
Pontoon Br.
Spearman's Hill
From Springfield
Mt Alice
R.N.
14 Guns
ZWART KOP
Schiet Dr.
To Colenso
Marit's Ferry

up; the ascent for the latter was so steep that several of the mules lost their footing and rolled headlong to the bottom.

This accomplished, the R.E. proceeded to blast a practicable roadway to prevent the necessity of again using the derrick, and thereby losing so much time. By the evening of the 2nd February, two 15-pounder field-guns, as well as those above mentioned—in all, fourteen guns—were in position on the summit, and a track had been made down the northern slopes towards the river, the crest on this side being screened by a belt of trees.

The operations of the next four or five days centred on the ridge of Vaal Krantz, which runs south from Brakfontein to the east of the great loop of the river Tugela. It is dry and rocky, and affords little cover in the way of trees or underwood.

On the 4th February (Sunday) the English on the south of the river broke up their camp. Sir Charles Warren's Division marched on Potgieter's Drift, and the 11th Brigade, now under General Wynne, relieved General Lyttelton on Krantz Kloof. They were supported by six field batteries; the 61st (howitzer) Battery took post behind them on one of the kopjes forming the kloof. Sir Francis Clery's Division proceeded along the south side of Zwart Kop out of sight of the enemy, towards Maritz Ferry.

Sir Redvers Buller's plan of operations was as follows:—On the 5th, General Wynne, supported by the artillery, was to make a demonstration against Brakfontein while the R.E. threw a bridge across the Tugela to the right rear of the guns on Krantz Kloof.

The latter, after bombarding Brakfontein for an hour and a half, were to be withdrawn one by one to the right bank of the Tugela, where they could be brought to bear on Vaal Krantz and the right attack.

Sir Francis Clery's Division, passing round the east of Zwart Kop, was to cross by another bridge of pontoons south of Vaal Krantz, which height they were to attack, supported by all the guns. This taken, the forty advanced guns were to cross and take a third position on it to support Sir Francis Clery in an attack on the east end of the Brakfontein position, while the 13th and 14th Hussars and one battery R.H.A. were to cover his right, and advance directly on their objective. It will be seen that their right rear was much exposed to the Boers occupying the nullah to the east of the pontoon bridge, and to the guns and troops on Doorn Kloof.

A second brigade of Colonial cavalry, with Lord Dundonald's galloping battery of Colts, was to resist attack from this direction, while General Wynne was to assist on the left as opportunity offered.

General Coke's two regiments were held in reserve.

At 7 A.M. on the 5th the R.A., including two 5-inch howitzers, took up their first position, and supported by the much-used 4·7-inch guns on Mount Alice, opened fire on Brakfontein, while the 1st York and Lancaster Regiment passed through their intervals, and advanced in extended order to about eight hundred yards from the Boer trenches, supported by the South Lancashire Regiment. The Boer artillery remained silent, and that of the English reduced its fire to one shot every five minutes, to husband the ammu-

nition. On the right of the York and Lancasters the Boers, in a farm and lining a donga, kept up an intermittent fire known to the troops as 'sniping.' At 11.30 A.M. the withdrawal of the R.F.A. commenced as ordered, and immediately the four Boer guns on Spion Kop opened a rapid fire at nearly five thousand yards range on the guns as they moved off in succession. One 45-pounder and two 12-pounders, with all the advantages of emplacement and altitude, could not be effectually replied to. The R.F.A. guns, however, were admirably served, and they all reached their second position by 1 P.M., though two of the guns, having had all their horses shot, were left for a time, and teams sent back for them afterwards. The shell-fire was very severe on the guns; Lieutenant-Colonel Montgomery and several officers and men were wounded. More than one gun was turned over, and one of the teams of the 19th Battery was stampeded, and with difficulty arrested by the men of the 78th Battery.

General Wynne's Brigade was then recalled, and at once the Brakfontein trenches, disappointed of getting them to come nearer, and up to this obstinately silent, broke into sheets of flame. The retirement was subjected to continuous long-range fire, but was effected with the loss of only twenty-three men.

By noon the pontoon bridge, about twelve hundred yards south of Vaal Krantz, was completed by the R.E. with the loss of eight men wounded by fire from the direction of Doorn Kloof. Its construction had only taken fifty minutes.

At the same time the gunners on Zwart Kop,

having cut down the screen of trees, came into action against Vaal Krantz. At 2 P.M., General Lyttelton crossed and marched up the left bank of the Tugela under shelter of the high ground for some six hundred yards. Between his men and Vaal Krantz lay a deep donga, with a stream running into the Tugela, and this and the lower slopes of Vaal Krantz were occupied by the Boers, who also held strongly a place called Monger's Farm on the right of the advance.

Accordingly, General Lyttelton extended the 1st Durham Light Infantry and Rifle Brigade, and sent one battalion half-right against Monger's Farm.

The Boers on Vaal Krantz, who had not expected this attack, and for two hours had endured the combined fire of over fifty guns, did not withdraw until the Durham Light Infantry reached the south end of the ridge with fixed bayonets. They then fled, leaving some thirty-three killed, twenty horses, and some prisoners. The Durhams lost during the day two officers killed and thirty-five men killed and wounded. During the afternoon the Boers reinforced their left, and sent the three guns on Spion Kop, behind the the ridge of Brakfontein, to the slopes of Doorn Kloof. They maintained a hot fire on the east slopes of Vaal Krantz, and forced General Lyttelton to take shelter on the western side. At nightfall his brigade commenced to fortify the ridge, but it was clearly seen that it by no means gave secure access to the Brakfontein position, as had been hoped, and the three guns removed to Doorn Kloof gave great annoyance, while their position could not be located by the British artillery. During the night, also, the Boers

had established 'Long Tom,' a Creusot 94-pounder on a disappearing mounting, on the summit of Doorn Kloof, and only for twelve seconds each time it was fired was anything visible either of the gun or its emplacement.

After no less than eighteen trial shots, the naval 12-pounders succeeded in getting its range. The captive balloon was in constant requisition, but does not seem to have been able to locate the position of the Boer guns in such a manner as to enable the artillery to find them out quickly. It should be added that the bore of the 4·7-inch guns was so worn that their firing was now less accurate.

The combat recommenced at 6 A.M. on the 6th, and up to 1 P.M. was confined to the guns, and so good were the Boer emplacements that none of their few pieces were silenced by the overwhelming superiority of the British artillery. About 4.30 P.M. the Boers made an effort to regain Vaal Krantz; creeping up to short range, supported by several Vickers-Maxim guns, they drove back the front line, and the position was very critical when General Lyttelton ordered the other half battalion of the Durham Light Infantry and the Rifle Brigade, under Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Fitzgerald of the former regiment, to fix bayonets and clear the slopes. With three cheers they left their lines, and drove the Boers right off the slopes. Colonel Fitzgerald, who had led this brilliant movement, was severely wounded.

Meantime the pontoon bridge, by which the R.F.A. had crossed the Tugela, had been taken in and rebuilt immediately at the foot of Vaal Krantz, on the slopes

of which the shells and the Boers had set fire to the grass between the belligerents.

At 6 P.M. the fighting had ended, and General Lyttelton's Brigade, which had in these two days lost two hundred and twenty-five killed and wounded, was relieved by General Hildyard's, which immediately set to work to further protect the position. Not uselessly either, for at midnight the Boers again attempted to retake the position, but this time they were more easily repulsed.

The following day was spent by both sides in their positions, the 5th Division being brought into the firing-line; the English found themselves outflanked and unable to move; the Boers, secure in the position Spion Kop-Brakfontein-Doorn Kloof, remained on the defensive. Sir Redvers Buller, who had bivouacked with the troops, and spent the days at the front seated under a tree, came to the conclusion that a further advance was impossible. His generals agreed in this, and on the evening of the 7th a general retreat across the river was ordered.

This order reached General Hildyard at 11 P.M., and all night long the convoys were travelling to Spearman's Camp, and the guns were being removed from Zwart Kop on Springfield, covered by Sir Charles Warren's Division. At 8 A.M. on the 8th the infantry also retired, followed by shells from Long Tom on Doorn Kloof; the pontoon bridges were then dismantled and brought off. At 5 A.M. on the 9th the Supply Depot was cleared, and the 10th Brigade recrossed the river.

Three days later the whole force was again back at

Chieveley, the attempt to reach Ladysmith by the Upper Tugela having been definitely abandoned.

During these three days the two brigades of Generals Wynne and Lyttelton, with the R.F.A. and the R.E., had done the bulk of the work, and had lost three hundred and seventy-three of all ranks, as follows:—

	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.
Officers, . . .	2	18	20
Men, ...	30	323	353

of whom the 1st Durham Light Infantry had lost two officers killed and six wounded, twelve men killed and seventy-six wounded, a total of twelve per cent. of their strength. In the 11th Brigade the Lancashire Fusiliers were replaced by a mixed rifle battalion, and it was openly said in camp that Sir Charles Warren was about to be recalled to Cape Colony.

On the 12th February Lord Dundonald, with the assistance of a battalion and a battery R.F.A., seized Hussar Hill, about six and a half miles north-east of Chieveley, whence Sir Redvers Buller could examine the Boer position. This lay on the hills round Colenso, passing east over Hlangwane Height to Cingolo, where the line was thrown back north, on a neck of high ground to Monte Cristo. Clearly it was necessary to take these three last-mentioned heights in order with safety to cross the Tugela and advance on Ladysmith. But it was not till the evening of the 14th that Hussar Hill was actually occupied and entrenched, as there was no water-supply nearer than the Blaauwkranz River, a mile or two to the south-east of it.

The 6th Brigade (General Barton's Fusiliers) was now added to Sir Charles Warren's command and marched with him, the 10th Brigade and the Cavalry Division being on the left, the 11th Brigade and the 2nd Division on the right of it. Sir Redvers Buller himself accompanied it also. At dawn on the 17th Lord Dundonald started on a long and difficult flank march to the east, to turn the left flank of the Boers, and to seize the hill Cingolo; he was supported by General Wynne's Brigade and General Lyttelton's Division; but when, about 11 A.M., his first two squadrons deployed on the summit, they found only a hundred Boers, who retired, leaving the hill to be occupied by the brigade, while the 2nd Division swung round to the left, pivoting on the captured hill. The next morning the English artillery, four 5-inch siege guns, two 4·7 naval guns, six naval 12-pounders, six howitzers, six field batteries R.F.A., and a mountain battery opened fire on the Boer position, and General Hildyard's Brigade advanced at 8 A.M. from Cingolo on Monte Cristo, supported on the right by Lord Dundonald. By 2 P.M. the hill was taken, and by 3 P.M. the 10th Brigade on the left occupied Green Hill, with a total British loss of two hundred killed and wounded. But the Boer position was effectually turned, and the next day (19th) General Barton advanced on Hlangwane, while the main body reached Green Hill; on the 20th General Barton took Hlangwane Hill, and bivouacked there; the following day the heavy guns were brought up and placed on Hlangwane, whence they drove the Boers across the Tugela. General Hart sent a battalion from Chieveley to occupy Colenso. On the 21st a

pontoon bridge was thrown across the Tugela at Pieter's Crossing, and was crossed by General Wynne's Brigade. The Boers were in force in the trenches on Pieter's Hill and engaged the brigade, which lost one hundred and fifty killed and wounded; among the latter was their general, who was succeeded in the command by Colonel Kitchener of the West Yorkshire Regiment. At dark the brigade was withdrawn, but the Boers followed it up to within sixty yards, and the 5th Division bivouacked just north of the Tugela; the dead and wounded were left out all night. Nevertheless, Sir Redvers Buller continued to bring over his infantry and the R.F.A., while the heavy guns also advanced, and on the afternoon of the 22nd the 11th Brigade seized some small hills north of the Tugela close to the railway. The next night it was vigorously attacked by the Boers, and although it repulsed them with heavy loss, its own amounted to three hundred killed and wounded.

Early on the 23rd Sir Redvers Buller and his staff crossed by the pontoon bridge, the cavalry fording the river near Fort Wylie. The Irish Brigade—General Hart's—was ordered to attack Pieter's Hill from the right. They were reinforced by the Imperial Light Infantry, and the column numbered three thousand men, with two thousand more in support. At 12.30 P.M., headed by the Inniskilling Fusiliers, they crept up the railway line in file, while their supports—the Durham Light Infantry and the Rifle Brigade—occupied the hill they had just left. At 4 P.M. General Hart ordered Colonel Thackeray, with the Inniskillings and two companies of the Dublin Fusiliers, and the

same of the Connaught Rangers, to assault the hill. The ground was much broken, and it was sunset before they reached the open ridge some four hundred yards from the Boer lines. All the British guns were at this time shelling the trenches, against which, on a front narrowed by the ridge to that of two companies, the Inniskillings advanced without a moment's hesitation, until the English guns had to cease fire to avoid hitting them. But the Boers, well entrenched, kept up a murderous fire, and the Inniskillings, refusing to retreat, had lost too many men to have a chance of success. Colonel Sitwell reinforced them with the four companies in support, and tried one furious assault before darkness set in. Success could not be hoped for; but what they had gained that they would keep, and as they lay the troops commenced to protect themselves and construct some sort of a breastwork, keeping up all the time a heavy fire on their adversaries. Out of twelve hundred men in the assaulting column, the British had lost two colonels, twenty-three other officers, and six hundred men killed or wounded. The whole of the next day the two sides remained but three hundred yards from one another, behind their *schantzes*, suffering chiefly from shell-fire, the Boers firing shrapnel and the British lyddite common shell at the trenches. The Irish Brigade had up to this formed the right of General Buller's infantry; but the latter now saw that his previous turning movement must be resumed, and on the 25th, Sunday evening, he withdrew the infantry of the left and centre across the Tugela to the east, so as

to have General Hart on his left; the whole afternoon was given up by both sides to the sick and wounded, and to the burial of the dead. The Boers reinforced their trenches, while Sir Redvers withdrew his convoy south of the Tugela. The former made a night attack to ascertain if the English had vacated their lines, but on being replied to they ceased firing. On the 26th Sir Charles Warren's headquarters were fifty yards below the Tugela falls, where a great pontoon bridge was begun while his troops moved east and formed to the left; first the 6th Brigade, then the 10th, and lastly the 4th, under Colonel Norcott. At 10 A.M. they attacked and all carried the heights in front of them, the 11th Brigade taking seventy prisoners of the Krugersdorp commando. The night that followed was very hot, though it poured with rain. Three days previously, on the 23rd, under cover of the gallant action fought at Pieter's Hill, the Boers commenced the withdrawal of their guns round Ladysmith. On the 27th, the anniversary of Majuba day, the pontoon bridge across the Tugela immediately in rear of General Hart's Brigade was continued, and the line occupied by this brigade prolonged to the right by Barton's, Kitchener's, and Norcott's Brigades in succession; the latter continued their attack on the Boer left and centre. This was supported from the commanding height south of the river by the fire of the Border Regiment and of the South African Light Horse, the Colt and Maxim batteries, and all the British artillery, which completely commanded the Boer left. By noon the left centre of the position was carried by General Barton. Colonel Norcott had deployed along

the river against Pieter's Hill, where the Inniskillings had suffered so severely on the 23rd and 24th, and Colonel Kitchener against Railway Hill.

General Barton's Brigade was able to enfilade the Boer trenches on these hills from the position he had won. The advance, well prepared and supported by the artillery, commenced at 1 P.M., and about 4 P.M. the neck joining what was known as 'Inniskilling Hill' and 'Railway Hill' was taken; the latter immediately afterwards was occupied by General Kitchener, and the Rifle Brigade then attacked and carried 'Inniskilling Hill.' Thus by 6 P.M. the whole left and centre of the Boers' entrenched position, two miles in length, was captured, with nearly a hundred prisoners, and without heavy loss to the British.

In the afternoon of the 26th the news of the surrender at Paardeberg caused something like a panic among some of the commandoes, and also reached Sir Redvers Buller and his staff. The next morning he heliographed to Sir George White: 'Have beaten the enemy thoroughly,' and those in Ladysmith could see a derrick erected to remove their old enemy, 'Long Tom,' on Mount Bulwhana, and every sign that the besiegers were trekking in haste. This, however, was not seen by the relieving force, and the cavalry and horse artillery continued to advance cautiously.

At 3 P.M. on the 28th, while the heavy guns were crossing the pontoon bridge, Lord Dundonald was yet six miles from Ladysmith, but before 6 P.M. the advanced scouts reported Ladysmith in sight, and no enemy in the way. He therefore determined to ride

into the town, covered by two squadrons of Natal Carabineers and Imperial Light Horse, under Major Gough. As they passed the hospital camp at Intombi the poor cripples turned out to cheer, and Colonel Royston, with two troops of the Carabineers in Ladysmith, was seen coming down to welcome them at the drift across the Klip River. At the cross roads, Sir George White, his staff, and the whole population awaited their arrival, and after mutual congratulations, they off-saddled at the lines of the Carabineers and Imperial Light Horse. What cheer was available in Ladysmith was at once forthcoming; but what the defenders prized most, tobacco, was in the haversacks of Lord Dundonald's men. Had not a quarter-pound tin of Navy cut been recently sold in the town for over £3?

Meantime the Boers, who were in possession of the railway from Modder Spruit station northwards, continued withdrawing their forces and guns. Sir Redvers Buller was not informed of the relief till the next morning, March 1st, when Sir George White had collected a column of two thousand men to endeavour to pursue the Boers. A squadron of the 19th Hussars, another of the 5th Lancers, and detachments of two hundred and fifty each, selected from the Liverpool, Manchester, and Devon Regiments, the 60th Rifles, and the Gordon Highlanders, made up the column, with two batteries of field artillery; the whole was under Colonel Knox. But their horses were mere skeletons, and the men themselves not up to marching. Colonel Knox marched against Pepworth Hill at dawn, but it was 2 P.M. before he got possession

of it, and commenced to shell the station below. His men were completely exhausted, and, being unable to do more, he returned to Ladysmith, having lost twelve men killed and wounded. The Boers had been able to remove three trains from the station with the last of their men, and had then blown up the railway bridge over the spruit at 2 P.M. on the 1st. They had abandoned all their camps and large quantities of stores and ammunition. They were not further molested in their retreat, as on March 1st the 5th Division crossed the Langverwacht Range, and bivouacked near Nelthorpe Station in the Klip River plain. Sir Redvers Buller remained on the 1st in camp at Pieter's, and, moving to a fresh camp six miles south of Ladysmith, made a formal entry on the 3rd March, when the troops marched past Sir George White, headed by Sir Redvers Buller and his staff; next followed the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, leading the 5th Division, under Sir Charles Warren.

Since the occupation of Hussar Hill on 14th February, the final stage of the relief had lasted fourteen days, and had cost the eighteen thousand men engaged heavy losses, as follows:—

	Killed.	Wounded.	Missing.	Total.
Officers, .	30	99	1	130
Men,	332	1635	15	1982
	Total, . . .			2112

The officers killed included the lieutenant-colonels commanding the South Lancashire Regiment (O'Leary), Inniskilling Fusiliers (Thackeray), Royal Dublin Fusiliers (Sitwell), Royal Welsh Fusiliers (Thorold); those

wounded included two generals and the officers commanding the East Surrey Regiment and the Royal Scots Fusiliers.

From first to last the relieving force had lost altogether three hundred officers and over five thousand men killed, wounded, and missing, not to mention those who, during the three months' hard work, had succumbed to illness.

The heaviest losses had been borne by the Dublin Fusiliers, twenty-four officers and five hundred and seventy-eight men; the Inniskilling Fusiliers, twenty-one officers and three hundred and sixty men; in neither regiment were many missing.

The two cavalry brigades were in better condition than the rest; but until the 5th March no move was made, though on the 1st no fewer than two thousand Boer wagons were trekking towards Newcastle and Dundee.

On the 5th General Lyttelton's Division, with Colonel Burn-Murdoch's cavalry brigade, three batteries R.F.A. and one R.H.A., encamped at Sunday's River, ten miles from the Boer position, while Lord Dundonald patrolled towards the Drakensberg Passes.

On the 10th March Sir Francis Clery took General Lyttelton's place, while the latter took command of the force relieved at Ladysmith, now recruiting in camp at Colenso; General Hildyard succeeded Sir Charles Warren in command of the 5th Division. About this time the exhausted troops suffered severely from enteric fever and dysentery, which affected all ranks, and were partly due to the ample supplies of provisions after weeks of scarcity.

CHAPTER X

THE SIEGE OF LADYSMITH

HAVING completed the account of the relief of Ladysmith, it is not fair on the gallant defenders to give no further account of the defence of that place, which, as we have seen, at least in its earlier stages, had a very great influence on the conduct of the war on both sides.

On the evening of November 2nd, 1899, when finally invested, Sir George White had about six thousand five hundred combatant troops with him; but the total number to be fed amounted to twenty-one thousand in all.

For rationing purposes these were divided as follows:—

Europeans over 10 years of age, . .	15,250
Cape Boys, drawing the same as above,	750
Children under 10, drawing half-rations,	150
Kaffirs, ...	2440
Indian camp followers, . . .	2470
Total, ...	21,060

The commissariat was, fortunately, in the hands of Colonel Ward, C.B., and there had been eighty days' supplies for some ten thousand men originally concentrated at Ladysmith. A considerable portion of

this had been forwarded to Dundee, and subsequently abandoned. It became necessary to requisition all the available food-supplies in the town, and by this means Colonel Ward collected seventeen hundred slaughter cattle, sixteen hundred trek oxen, five thousand five hundred horses, four thousand five hundred mules, fourteen thousand tins of preserved milk, many hundred thousand pounds' weight of mealies, and all the groceries that could be found in the town.

Towards the end of January the draught animals were killed for food, about thirty a day being converted into soup or sausages which were known as Chevril. About this time, also, only eleven hundred horses were being rationed, the remaining draught animals being killed or left to shift for themselves.

Up to December 15th the daily European ration was as follows:—

1 lb. fresh meat.
1 lb. bread.
1 oz. flour, or 4 oz. of mealies.
4 oz. sugar.
$\frac{1}{3}$ oz. tea.

But after the action at Colenso it was reduced, and at the end of January the rations of meat and bread were half a pound each, of sugar one ounce, of tea one-third of an ounce, and of flour *nil*.

On the 4th of November Joubert agreed that the wounded, the sick, and those of the inhabitants who had never borne arms against the Boers might be encamped under the Red Cross, near where the railway line crosses the Intombi Spruit, in the plain under

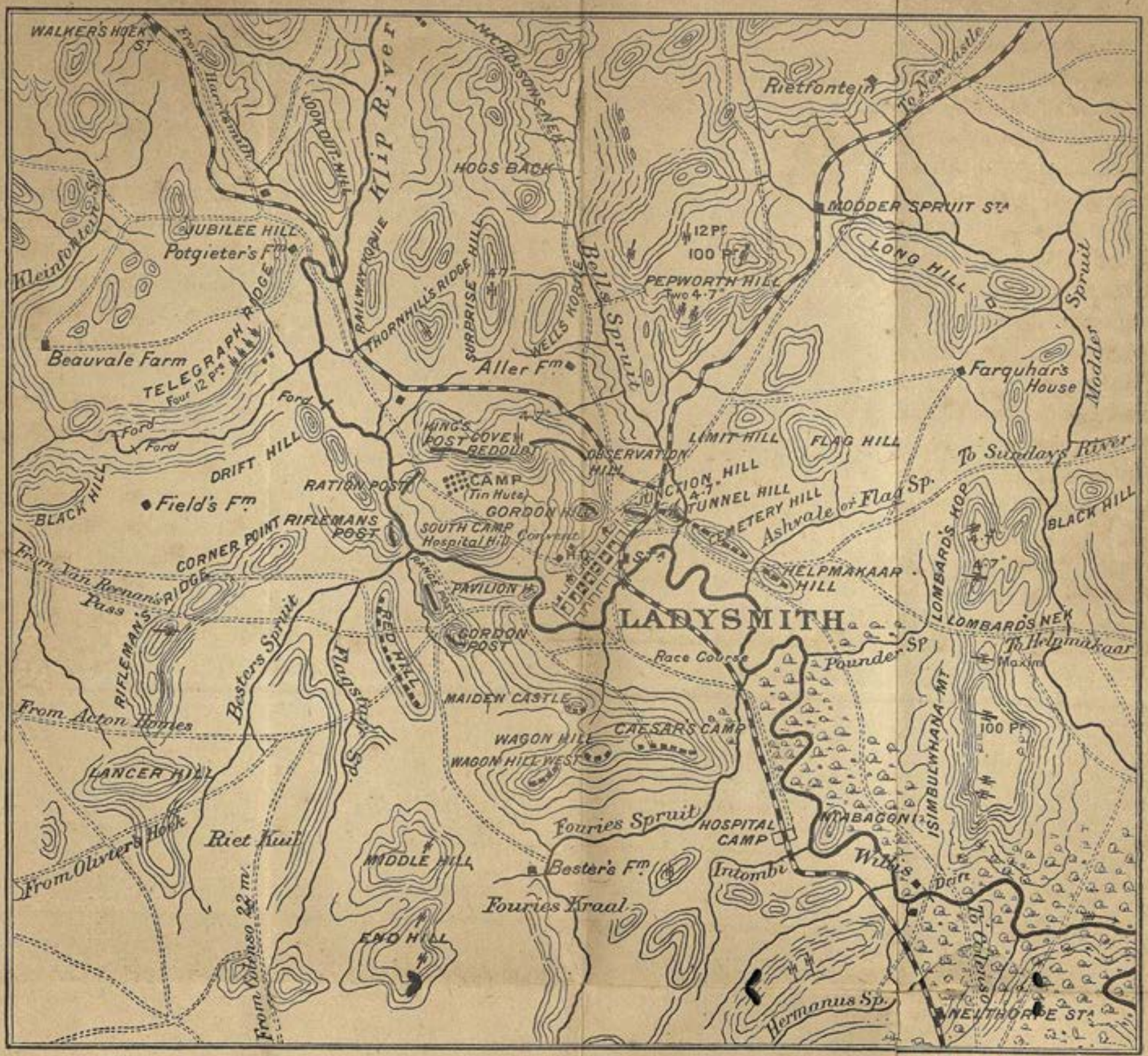
Isimbulwhana. Here between four thousand and five thousand men, women, and children formed a neutral camp, and one train went backward and forward every day, conveying the necessary food for their subsistence out of the scanty stores of the garrison. Here, too, the sick and wounded were sent, but, as the position was low and unhealthy, convalescents were, as soon as they were able to bear arms, very glad to return to the camp at Ladysmith.

In February the fighting strength of the garrison was strengthened by a force of nearly nine thousand civilians—railway employés, artisans, transport riders, every one, in fact, who could be taught to handle a rifle was pressed into the service, and the only wonder is that this was not done before Christmas. There is little doubt that up to the 7th of January the staff were kept fully occupied, and it was only when the arrangements for defence were sufficiently completed, and some of the besiegers were already withdrawn elsewhere, that they were able to give their attention to the raw material that could be converted into defenders of their extended lines. Most of the four regiments of cavalry and of the Colonial Light Horse were put on dismounted duties, and their retention in Ladysmith at the end of October seems to have been certainly an error of judgment. Colonel Brocklehurst's brigade, consisting of the 5th Dragoon Guards, 5th Lancers, the 18th and 19th Hussars, would have been most useful elsewhere, and they were so crippled by the privations of the siege and the loss of their horses that they were unserviceable for some time after Ladysmith had been relieved.

On the other hand, it may be said that it was owing to the use of this cavalry that Sir George White was able to extend his line of defences as he did at the beginning of December. He had at first thought to hold only the ground within the following points:—Cove Redoubt, Observation Hill, Junction Hill, Poundberry and Pavilion Hills, Gordon Post, and Range Post; but as soon as the Boer 94-pounder commenced firing from Pepworth Hill it was evident that if the ridges to the south—Cæsar's Camp, Wagon Hill, and Red Hill—were left unoccupied Ladysmith could not be held.

Under bombardment there must be room to shift, also it was necessary to keep the Boer artillery as far as possible from the town and the camps. Accordingly, the defences were extended as shown on the sketch, and regular shelters and bomb-proofs were constructed near each point occupied, in addition to breastworks, trenches, and redoubts. The infantry were distributed to sections of the defence; the mounted troops were held in reserve in the centre, and furnished the patrols and outlying picquets. The line of defence was about twelve and a half miles long, and twelve thousand sandbags were available for the work. Headquarters were established near the Convent, in the centre of the defences, and the reserves were accommodated with bomb-proof shelters near the Klip River.

The Naval Brigade, who had so opportunely come into action at 11.30 A.M. on the 30th October, provided the most valuable part of the armament. They brought two 4·7-inch guns, which were the only ones



Scale $\frac{1}{126720}$ or 1 inch to 2 miles.

1 ½ 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

MILE MILES

——— Original British Positions ------- Extension of Position

capable of replying to the Boer 94-pounders on Pepworth and Bulwhana. These were stationed one on Cove Redoubt, the other on Tunnel Hill. Between the two, on Junction Hill, was the battery of four naval 12-pounders and its camp. They also had brought four Maxims, which were available to assist the infantry.

Very little was done at first, except to occupy positions on either side, and prepare for the struggle. The pivot mountings of the 4·7-inch guns had to be formed in cement; that at Tunnel Hill was not ready for use until November 2nd, that in Cove Redoubt first fired on the 7th. On the former date began a duel between Pepworth Hill and Tunnel Hill, where the 4·7-inch gun was commanded by Lieutenant Egerton of the *Powerful*. His emplacement lay low, and a shell from the 94-pounder, just clearing the crest, burst close to the gun detachment, who were all lying as safely as they could. When they stood up again, and the smoke cleared, it was found that their commanding officer was terribly injured. As they carried him down the hill this true bluejacket remarked, 'No more cricket for me.' Both legs had to be amputated, and that night he died.

It will be seen from the map that Ladysmith lies on the north-west side of a four-sided cup, surrounded by hills. On three sides the hills lie close in, and were occupied by the British, while on the fourth, beyond the racecourse, Mount Bulwhana and Lombard's Kop lie at a distance, but are so much higher that this side commands not only the river, the railway, and the town, but also the positions on the other three sides.

Several of the guns originally bought for the forts at Pretoria were brought down for the siege of Ladysmith, and were distributed as follows:—On Pepworth Hill the Creusot 94-pounder already mentioned, and on the lower slopes in front two 4·7-inch howitzers, one mountain gun, and one 12-pounder; on Lombard's Kop two more 4·7-inch howitzers; on Bulwhana another Creusot 94-pounder, a Maxim, and two field pieces; on the hill between Nelthorpe Station and Intombi Spruit two field-pieces; south of Cæsar's Camp one, on End Hill two, and on Middle Hill one, field-pieces; one more on Rifleman's Ridge; four 15-pounders on Telegraph Ridge; one field-piece on Thornhill's Ridge, and one howitzer on Surprise Hill completed the tale. Thus they had twenty-four guns in all, and it is estimated that they threw sixteen thousand shells during the siege. The bombardment varied much in intensity; but the 94-pounders did so much damage that many of the inhabitants took refuge in the bombproofs near the Klip, while all the remainder went underground as soon as Long Tom's well-known voice was heard. Sunday was generally a day off on both sides, and the bombardment did not prevent occasional football matches and a good collection of onlookers. Communication was kept up by pigeon-post with Durban, and by heliograph with General Buller, and occasionally a runner would get through the Boer lines with despatches from Steevens or another of the little band of besieged journalists. The death of the former from fever at the end of the siege has deprived the world of perhaps its most brilliant journalist, whose many accomplishments and

brilliant scholarship were reflected in his writings, so that his promise was even greater than his actual achievement.

After November 2nd the life of the besieged was one of constant watchfulness and increasing privation, but absolutely monotonous. The only variation was in the amount of shell-fire during the day; but the damage done from Lombard's Kop and Bulwhana became more trying than all the rest. Accordingly, early in December, General Hunter, the Chief of the Staff, formed the plan of surprising these guns by night. On the evening of the 7th, about 9 P.M., a smoking-concert was going on in the Natal Volunteers' lines, when Major Edwards suddenly fell in the Imperial Light Horse, and selected thirty-five men from each squadron—about one hundred in all. They marched on foot to the outer lines on the S.E., and there met General Hunter, one hundred of the Border Mounted Rifles, also on foot, and Colonel Royston with five hundred mounted men of the Natal Carabineers, besides Captain Fowke, R.E., with a small party of gunners and sappers provided with guncotton.

Major Edwards and Major Henderson, D.A.A.G., led the two hundred dismounted men straight on Gun Hill, the part of Mount Bulwhana on which the 94-pounder emplacement was; Colonel Royston, with the mounted men, covered the flanks and secured the retreat. Nearly five miles of plain led to the foot of the steep slope, but this was crossed without arousing the Boers. Half-way up the ascent the party was first challenged, and, without replying, lay down to recover their wind. The ascent was very steep, and

the defenders, who had been asleep behind the crest, now fired wildly over the edge, doing little harm. As the Imperial Light Horse men got near the top they shouted 'Fix bayonets!' and every man cheered. The Border Rifles on their right did the same. There was not a bayonet among them; but the Boer dread of the 'cold steel' was well known, and the ruse succeeded. They bolted across the two hundred yards of level top and down the other side so fast that when their assailants reached the eastern edge of the hill there was not a sign of a Boer to be seen. On this edge the Rifles took post, while Captain Fowke's party searched for the two gun emplacements.

These were soon found a little distance apart, with a Maxim gun between them. Their breech-pieces having been removed, charges of guncotton were fixed in the muzzle and breech of each gun, and a two-minute fuse was fixed ready to light. General Hunter then ordered the storming-party to get back to the bottom of the hill and re-form there, while the two R.E. officers lighted the fuses. The I.L.H. managed to get the Maxim away with them as a trophy. The explosion followed, and after Captain Fowke had examined the guns to see that the damage was complete, the whole party returned to Ladysmith with only ten casualties in all. This was the most brilliant and successful offensive action taken by the garrison during the siege.

On the 10th December the Rifle Brigade made a similar attack on Surprise Hill, when Lieutenant Digby Jones, of the Engineers, destroyed the 4·7-inch

howitzer there. The Boers were not to be caught again, and, in the absence of any covering force, the loss of the Rifle Brigade was heavier than that of the Colonials on the 7th, as they were cut off from Ladysmith by a superior force; in forcing their way back, they lost one officer and ten men killed, three officers and forty men wounded, and six unwounded men were taken prisoners.

On the 15th December Sir George White endeavoured by a demonstration to assist Sir Redvers Buller in his engagement at Colenso; but otherwise the besieged were unable to do more than hold their own. The news of Lord Roberts's appointment and the despatch of large reinforcements from England decided the Boers to forsake their usual method of fighting, and to make one determined attack before withdrawing some of their forces nearer home.

Their initial mistake in the siege had been to let Sir George White extend his lines to the south, so as to include the ridge comprising Wagon Hill and Cæsar's Camp. This ridge stands some eight hundred feet higher than the town, and is slightly curved to the south at Wagon Hill West, forming a kind of crescent, the ends of which afforded no field of fire to the defenders, while the south slope in the centre was much more gentle and grassy.

Shortly after midnight of January 5th the Boers assembled to attack both horns of the crescent in force. Between Wagon Hill and Wagon Hill West is a nek, the approach to which, while less steep, is almost dead ground. At the top of this a working party—R.E. and half a company of Gordon Highlanders

—were constructing a gun-emplacement on Wagon Hill West, which was garrisoned as usual by two squadrons of the Imperial Light Horse.

Three hundred picked men of the Harrismith commando surprised the picquets at 2.30 A.M. on the 6th, and caused great confusion. The Gordons, at work, rushed back to get their arms, while the sappers, under Digby Jones, formed behind the emplacement, but were soon driven off the hill. The Boers, advancing up to the nek, drove in the picquets of the half-battalion of 60th Rifles, who garrisoned Wagon Hill proper, while seventeen of the Gordons, of whom thirteen were wounded, were captured on Wagon Hill West.

Colonel Ian Hamilton, commanding this section of the defence, telephoned for reinforcements as soon as the attack developed, and the first to arrive were the two and a half companies of Gordons in support at Fly Kraal. Of these, one went to help the Manchester Regiment, who were holding the whole of Cæsar's Camp with the 42nd Battery R.F.A., and one naval 12-pounder; the remainder, under Major Miller Walnutt, went towards Wagon Hill, which was towards 4 A.M. very seriously threatened by the Boers, who kept pushing up the watercourse to the nek. On the east of this was a sangar on higher ground, held by the remnants of the Imperial Light Horse and some of the 60th.

Miller Walnutt and Digby Jones rallied all the men they could on the north slopes of Wagon Hill West; the Boers swarmed on the south—neither side dared venture on the top. By this time fully one thousand

Boers were engaged, either at Cæsar's Camp or Wagon Hill.

At 4.20 A.M. Colonel Dick-Cuninghame, V.C., was leaving Ladysmith with four companies of Gordons to reinforce Cæsar's Camp, when a chance bullet inflicted on him a mortal wound, just south of Klip River Bridge. Major Edwards galloped off with the other two squadrons of the I.L.H. to Wagon Hill, and reinforced his men near the nek in the nick of time. Their position had become the key to the whole of the ridge, and the Boers pressed their attack steadily.

In vain efforts to dislodge the Boers, or even to find cover in front of the sangar, no less than four officers were killed and five wounded during the day; but their valour undoubtedly saved the ridge before the reinforcements ordered could arrive. Four companies of the 1st Battalion 60th, under Colonel Gore Browne, went to Wagon Hill, while half a battalion of the Rifle Brigade were sent from King's Post to Cæsar's Camp. The 21st Battery R.F.A. (supported by the 18th Hussars), on the right, and the 53rd on the left, flanked the south slopes of the ridge, and, although themselves under a hot fire, succeeded in preventing the Boers engaged from being reinforced. The latter at no time exceeded one thousand two hundred men, and the remainder of the besiegers, instead of making a combined and vigorous attack on the northern defences, allowed Sir George White to send reinforcements from these to the south, and thus lost the only chance they ever had of taking Ladysmith.

Colonel Gore Browne sent two of his companies to

assist Miller Walnutt, and with their help the plateau on the top of Wagon Hill West and the deserted gun-emplacement were reoccupied by the firing-line. About 11 A.M. three companies of the Devons reinforced Wagon Hill, and the firing slackened for some time. At 2 P.M., however, Commandants Van Wyk and De Villiers made a brave assault on the hill, and although only eight men succeeded in reaching the crest, the British firing-line deserted their only officer (Miller Walnutt), and rushed back to the rear slope. De Villiers, followed by one man only, entered the emplacement. Its only occupants were Miller Walnutt and a sapper; both had been shot dead. But Digby Jones, who had previously led the assault that reoccupied the ridge, rushed to the rescue with his sappers, shot De Villiers, and recaptured the emplacement. At that moment the brave young officer fell dead, shot through the throat, and soon after a brother officer looking for him on the crest was also killed. The hill, however, was saved and reoccupied.

After 3 P.M. it began to rain heavily, and by 4 P.M. there was a violent thunderstorm, during which the Boers made a last effort. Again Wagon Hill West was only saved by the reserves, under Major Rice, R.E. On Wagon Hill matters looked worse until the three companies of the 1st Devons, fixing their bayonets, crossed the sixty yards of plateau, and, in spite of heavy loss, drove the Boers from their cover, down the slopes, and right across the Fouries Spruit.

The three companies lost all their officers except Lieutenant-Colonel Park; of the men, fifteen were killed and forty wounded in this charge alone.

Before dark the whole line was clear of the Boers, who had lost in the day fifty-four killed and ninety-six wounded, nearly all Free Staters of Harrismith.

In the seventeen hours' fighting the British loss was fifteen officers killed and thirty wounded; in men, one hundred and thirty-five killed and two hundred and thirty-eight wounded; making a total of four hundred and eighteen against one hundred and fifty lost by the Boers. They had, however, saved Ladysmith, and from that day till the relief no other attempt to take the town was ever made.

The garrison, however, became more and more enfeebled; the total number of cases treated in the Intombi Hospital was eight thousand four hundred and twenty-four, of whom one thousand seven hundred and ten were suffering from typhoid fever, and four hundred and seventy-six died.

Their losses from fire were—in officers, twenty killed and sixty-two wounded, seven of these mortally; in men, two hundred and thirty killed and five hundred and ten wounded, fifty-four mortally, making a total of eight hundred and twenty-two, as well as fourteen men taken prisoners. It will be noticed that just half of this number were lost in one day, on January 6th. Of this total the bombardment was only responsible for thirty-five killed, and twenty officers with one hundred and sixty-eight men wounded.

Ammunition also ran low, especially for artillery, and on the 28th February the naval guns had only forty rounds apiece left. It does not appear that at Ladysmith any ammunition was manufactured, as at Kimberley or Mafeking; but this is accounted for by

the large stores of ammunition collected there in the autumn, and the hope and expectation of speedy relief, a relief which, after all, did not arrive for one hundred and eighteen days.

The following document is interesting, as showing the highest prices paid for 'extras' during the siege:—

SIEGE OF LADYSMITH—1899-1900.

I certify that the following are the correct and highest prices realised at my sales by public auction during the above siege. JOE DYSON, *Auctioneer.*

LADYSMITH, February 21, 1900.

	£	s.	d.
14 lbs. Oatmeal,	2	19	6
Condensed Milk, per tin,	0	10	0
1 lb. Beef Fat,	0	11	0
1-lb. Tin Coffee,	0	17	0
2-lb. Tin Tongue,	1	6	0
1 Sucking Pig,	1	17	0
Eggs, per dozen,	2	8	0
Fowls, each,	0	18	6
4 Small Cucumbers,	0	15	6
Green Mealies, each,	0	3	8
Small Plate Grapes,	1	5	0
1 Small Plate Apples,	0	12	6
1 Plate Tomatoes,	0	18	0
1 Vegetable Marrow,	1	8	0
1 Plate Eschalots,	0	11	0
1 Plate Potatoes,	0	19	0
3 Small Bunches Carrots,	0	9	0
1 Glass Jelly,	0	18	0
1-lb. Bottle Jam,	1	11	0
1-lb. Tin Marmalade,	1	1	0
1 Dozen Matches,	0	13	6

	£	s.	d.
1 Packet Cigarettes,	1	5	0
50 Cigars,	9	5	0
¼-lb. Cake 'Fair Maid' Tobacco,	2	5	0
½-lb. Cake 'Fair Maid'	3	5	0
1 lb. Sailors' Tobacco,	2	3	0
¼- Tin 'Capstan' Navy Cut Tobacco,	3	0	0

APPENDIX A

PRETORIA CONVENTION

CONVENTION FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF THE TRANSVAAL TERRITORY

August 1881.

PREAMBLE.

Her Majesty's Commissioners for the Settlement of the Transvaal territory, duly appointed as such by a Commission passed under the Royal Sign Manual and Signet, bearing date the 5th day of April 1881, do hereby undertake and guarantee on behalf of Her Majesty that, from and after the 8th day of August 1881, complete self-government, subject to the suzerainty of Her Majesty, her heirs and successors, will be accorded to the inhabitants of the Transvaal territory, upon the following terms and conditions, and subject to the following reservations and limitations:—

ARTICLE I.

The said territory, to be hereinafter called the Transvaal State, will embrace the lands lying between the following boundaries, to wit: [Here follow three pages in print defining boundaries.]

ARTICLE II.

Her Majesty reserves to herself, her heirs and successors, (*a*) the right from time to time to appoint a British Resident in and for the said State, such duties and functions as are hereinafter defined; (*b*) the right to move troops through the said State in time of war, or in case of the apprehension of immediate war between the Suzerain Power and any Foreign State or Native tribe in South Africa; and (*c*) the control of the external relations of the said State, including the conclusion of treaties and the conduct of diplomatic intercourse

with Foreign Powers, such intercourse to be carried on through Her Majesty's diplomatic and consular officers abroad.

ARTICLE III.

Until altered by the Volksraad, or other competent authority, all laws, whether passed before or after the annexation of the Transvaal territory to Her Majesty's dominions, shall, except in so far as they are inconsistent with or repugnant to the provisions of this Convention, be and remain in force in the said State in so far as they shall be applicable thereto, provided that no future enactment, especially affecting the interest of natives, shall have any force or effect in the said State, without the consent of Her Majesty, her heirs and successors, first had and obtained and signified to the Government of the said State through the British Resident, provided further that in no case will the repeal or amendment of any laws enacted since the annexation have a retrospective effect, so as to invalidate any acts done or liabilities incurred by virtue of such laws.

ARTICLE IV.

On the 8th day of August 1881, the Government of the said State, together with all rights and obligations thereto appertaining, and all State property taken over at the time of annexation, save and except munitions of war, will be handed over to Messrs. Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger, Martinus Wessel Pretorius, and Petrus Jacobus Joubert, or the survivor or survivors of them, who will forthwith cause a Volksraad to be elected and convened, and the Volksraad, thus elected and convened, will decide as to the further administration of the Government of the said State.

ARTICLE V.

All sentences passed upon persons who may be convicted of offences contrary to the rules of civilised warfare committed during the recent hostilities will be duly carried out, and no alteration or mitigation of such sentences will be made or allowed by the Government of the Transvaal State without Her Majesty's consent conveyed through the British Resident. In case there shall be any prisoners in any of the gaols of the Transvaal State whose respective sentences of imprisonment have been remitted in part by Her Majesty's Administrator or other officer administering the Government, such remission

will be recognised and acted upon by the future Government of the said State.

ARTICLE VI.

Her Majesty's Government will make due compensation for all losses or damage sustained by reason of such acts as are in the 8th Article hereinafter specified, which may have been committed by Her Majesty's forces during the recent hostilities, except for such losses or damage as may already have been compensated for, and the Government of the Transvaal State will make due compensation for all losses or damage sustained by reason of such acts as are in the 8th Article hereinafter specified which may have been committed by the people who were in arms against Her Majesty during the recent hostilities, except for such losses or damages as may already have been compensated for.

ARTICLE VII.

The decision of all claims for compensation, as in the last preceding Article mentioned, will be referred to a Sub-Commission, consisting of the Honourable George Hudson, the Honourable Jacobus Petrus de Wet, and the Honourable John Gilbert Kotzé. In case one or more of such Sub-Commissioners shall be unable or unwilling to act, the remaining Sub-Commissioner or Sub-Commissioners will, after consultation with the Government of the Transvaal State, submit for the approval of Her Majesty's High Commissioners the names of one or more persons to be appointed by them to fill the place or places thus vacated. The decision of the said Sub-Commissioners, or of a majority of them, will be final. The said Sub-Commissioners will enter upon and perform their duties with all convenient speed. They will, before taking evidence or ordering evidence to be taken in respect of any claim, decide whether such claim can be entertained at all under the rules laid down in the next succeeding Article. In regard to claims which can be so entertained, the Sub-Commissioners will in the first instance afford every facility for an amicable arrangement as to the amount payable in respect of any claim, and only in cases in which there is no reasonable ground for believing that an immediate amicable arrangement can be arrived at will they take evidence, or order evidence to be taken. For the purpose of taking evidence and reporting thereon, the Sub-Commissioners may

appoint Deputies, who will, without delay, submit records of the evidence and their reports to the Sub-Commissioners. The Sub-Commissioners will arrange their sittings and the sittings of their Deputies in such a manner as to afford the earliest convenience to the parties concerned and their witnesses. In no case will costs be allowed to either side other than the actual and reasonable expenses of witnesses whose evidence is certified by the Sub-Commissioners to have been necessary. Interest will not run on the amount of any claim, except as is hereinafter provided for. The said Sub-Commissioners will forthwith, after deciding upon any claim, announce their decision to the Government against which the award is made and to the claimant. The amount of remuneration payable to the Sub-Commissioners and their Deputies shall be determined by the High Commissioners. After all the claims have been decided upon, the British Government and the Government of the Transvaal State will pay proportionate shares of the said remuneration and of the expenses of the said Sub-Commissioners and their Deputies, according to the amount awarded against them respectively.

ARTICLE VIII.

For the purpose of distinguishing claims to be accepted from those to be rejected, the Sub-Commissioners will be guided by the following rules, viz.:—Compensation to be allowed for losses or damage sustained by reason of the following acts committed during the recent hostilities, viz.: (*a*) commandeering, seizure, confiscation, or destruction of property, or damage done to property; (*b*) violence done or threats used by persons in arms. In regard to acts under (*a*) compensation will be allowed for direct losses only. In regard to acts falling under (*b*), compensation will be allowed for actual losses of property, or actual injury to the same proved to have been caused by its enforced abandonment. No claims for indirect losses, except such as are in this Article especially provided for, will be entertained. No claims which have been handed in to the Secretary of the Royal Commission after the 1st day of July 1881 will be entertained, unless the Sub-Commissioners shall be satisfied that the delay was reasonable. When claims for loss of property are considered, the Sub-Commissioners will require distinct proof of the existence of the property, and that it neither has reverted nor will revert to the claimant.

ARTICLE IX.

The Government of the Transvaal State will pay and satisfy the amount of every claim awarded against it within one month after the Sub-Commissioners shall have notified their decision to the said Government, and in default of such payment the said Government will pay interest at the rate of six per cent. per annum from the date of such default; but Her Majesty's Government may at any time before such payment pay the amount, with interest, if any, to the claimant in satisfaction of his claim, and may add the sum thus paid to any debt which may be due by the Transvaal State to Her Majesty's Government, as hereinafter provided for.

ARTICLE X.

The Transvaal State will be liable for the balance of the debts for which the South African Republic was liable at the date of annexation, to wit, the sum of £48,000 in respect of the Cape Commercial Bank Loan, and £85,667 in respect of the Railway Loan, together with the amount due on 8th August 1881, on account of the Orphan Chamber debt, which now stands at £22,200, which debts will be a first charge upon the revenues of the State. The Transvaal State will, moreover, be liable for the lawful expenditure lawfully incurred for the necessary expenses of the Province since the annexation, to wit, the sum of £265,000, which debt, together with such debts as may be incurred by virtue of the 9th Article, will be a second charge upon the revenues of the State.

ARTICLE XI.

The debts due as aforesaid by the Transvaal State to Her Majesty's Government will bear interest at the rate of three and a half per cent., and any portion of such debt which may remain unpaid at the expiration of twelve months from the 8th August 1881 shall be repayable by a payment for interest and sinking fund of six pounds and ninepence per cent. per annum, which will extinguish the debt in twenty-five years. The said payment of six pounds and ninepence per £100 shall be payable half-yearly in British currency on the 8th February and 8th August in each year. Provided always that the Transvaal State shall pay in reduction of the said debt the sum of £100,000 within twelve months of the 8th August 1881, and

shall be at liberty at the close of any half-year to pay off the whole or any portion of the outstanding debt.

ARTICLE XII.

All persons holding property in the said State on the 8th day of August 1881 will continue after the said date to enjoy the rights of property which they have enjoyed since the annexation. No person who has remained loyal to Her Majesty during the recent hostilities shall suffer any molestation by reason of his loyalty, or be liable to any criminal prosecution or civil action for any part taken in connection with such hostilities, and all such persons will have full liberty to reside in the country, with enjoyment of all civil rights, and protection for their persons and property.

ARTICLE XIII.

Natives will be allowed to acquire land, but the grant or transfer of such land will, in every case, be made to and registered in the name of the Native Location Commission, hereinafter mentioned, in trust for such natives.

ARTICLE XIV.

Natives will be allowed to move as freely within the country as may be consistent with the requirements of public order, and to leave it for the purpose of seeking employment elsewhere or for other lawful purposes, subject always to the pass laws of the said State, as amended by the Legislature of the Province, or as may hereafter be enacted under the provisions of the Third Article of this Convention.

ARTICLE XV.

There will continue to be complete freedom of religion and protection from molestation for all denominations, provided the same be not inconsistent with morality and good order, and no disability shall attach to any person in regard to rights of property by reason of the religious opinions which he holds.

ARTICLE XVI.

The provisions of the Fourth Article of the Sand River Convention are hereby reaffirmed, and no slavery or apprenticeship partaking of slavery will be tolerated by the Government of the said State.

ARTICLE XVII.

The British Resident will receive from the Government of the Transvaal State such assistance and support as can by law be given to him for the due discharge of his functions; he will also receive every assistance for the proper care and preservation of the graves of such of Her Majesty's forces as have died in the Transvaal, and if need be for the expropriation of land for the purpose.

ARTICLE XVIII.

The following will be the duties and functions of the British Resident:—

Sub-section 1.—He will perform functions and duties analogous to those discharged by a Chargé d'Affaires and Consul-General.

Sub-section 2.—In regard to natives within the Transvaal State, he will (*a*) report to the High Commissioner, as representative of the Suzerain, as to the working and observance of the provisions of this Convention; (*b*) report to the Transvaal authorities any cases of ill-treatment of natives or attempts to incite natives to rebellion that may come to his knowledge; (*c*) use his influence with the natives in favour of law and order; and (*d*) generally perform such other duties as are by this Convention intrusted to him, and take such steps for the protection of the person and property of natives as are consistent with the laws of the land.

Sub-section 3.—In regard to natives not residing in the Transvaal, (*a*) he will report to the High Commissioner and the Transvaal Government any encroachments reported to him as having been made by Transvaal residents upon the land of such natives, and in case of disagreement between the Transvaal Government and the British Resident as to whether an encroachment had been made, the decision of the Suzerain will be final; (*b*) the British resident will be the medium of communication with native chiefs outside the Transvaal, and, subject to the approval of the High Commissioner, as representing the Suzerain, he will control the conclusion of treaties with them; and (*c*) he will arbitrate upon every dispute between Transvaal residents and natives outside the Transvaal (as to acts committed beyond the boundaries of the Transvaal) which may be referred to him by the parties interested.

Sub-section 4.—In regard to communications with foreign Powers, the Transvaal Government will correspond with Her

Majesty's Government through the British Resident and the High Commissioner.

ARTICLE XIX.

The Government of the Transvaal State will strictly adhere to the boundaries defined in the First Article of this Convention, and will do its utmost to prevent any of its inhabitants from making any encroachment upon lands beyond the said State. The Royal Commission will forthwith appoint a person who will beacon off the boundary line between Ramatlabama and the point where such line first touches Griqualand West boundary, midway between the Vaal and Hart rivers; the person so appointed will be instructed to make an arrangement between the owners of the farms Grootfontein and Valleifontein on the one hand, and the Barolong authorities on the other, by which a fair share of the water-supply of the said farms shall be allowed to flow undisturbed to the said Barolongs.

ARTICLE XX.

All grants or titles issued at any time by the Transvaal Government in respect of land outside the boundary of Transvaal State, as defined, Article I., shall be considered invalid and of no effect, except in so far as any such grant or title relates to land that falls within the boundary of the Transvaal State, and all persons holding any such grant so considered invalid and of no effect will receive from the Government of the Transvaal State such compensation either in land or in money as the Volksraad shall determine. In all cases in which any native chiefs or other authorities outside the said boundaries have received any adequate consideration from the Government of the former South African Republic for land excluded from the Transvaal by the First Article of this Convention, or where permanent improvements have been made on the land, the British Resident will, subject to the approval of the High Commissioner, use his influence to recover from the native authorities fair compensation for the loss of the land thus excluded, and of the permanent improvement thereon.

ARTICLE XXI.

Forthwith, after the taking effect of this Convention, a Native Location Commission will be constituted, consisting of

the President, or in his absence the Vice-President of the State, or some one deputed by him, the Resident, or some one deputed by him, and a third person to be agreed upon by the President or the Vice-President, as the case may be, and the Resident, and such Committee will be a standing body for the performance of the duties hereinafter mentioned.

ARTICLE XXII.

The Native Location Commission will reserve to the native tribes of the State such locations as they may be fairly and equitably entitled to, due regard being had to the actual occupation of such tribes. The Native Location Commission will clearly define the boundaries of such locations, and for that purpose will, in every instance, first of all ascertain the wishes of the parties interested in such land. In case land already granted in individual titles shall be required for the purpose of any location, the owners will receive such compensation either in other land or in money as the Volksraad shall determine. After the boundaries of any location have been fixed, no fresh grant of land within such location will be made, nor will the boundaries be altered without the consent of the Location Commission. No fresh grants of land will be made in the districts of Waterberg, Zoutpansberg, and Lydenburg until the locations in the said districts respectively shall have been defined by the said Commission.

ARTICLE XXIII.

If not released before the taking effect of this Convention, Sikukuni, and those of his followers who have been imprisoned with him, will be forthwith released, and the boundaries of his location will be defined by the Native Location Commission in the manner indicated in the last preceding Article.

ARTICLE XXIV.

The independence of the Swazies within the boundary line of Swaziland, as indicated in the First Article of this Convention, will be fully recognised.

ARTICLE XXV.

No other or higher duties will be imposed on the importation into the Transvaal State of any article the produce or manufacture of the dominions and possessions of Her Majesty,

from whatever place arriving, than are or may be payable on the like article the produce or manufacture of any other country, nor will any prohibition be maintained or imposed on the importation of any article the produce or manufacture of the dominions and possessions of Her Majesty, which shall not equally extend to the importation of the like articles being the produce or manufacture of any other country.

ARTICLE XXVI.

All persons other than natives conforming themselves to the laws of the Transvaal State (*a*) will have full liberty with their families to enter, travel, or reside in any part of the Transvaal State; (*b*) they will be entitled to hire or possess houses, manufactures, warehouses, shops, and premises; (*c*) they may carry on their commerce either in person or by any agents whom they may think fit to employ; (*d*) they will not be subject in respect of their persons or property, or in respect of their commerce or industry to any taxes, whether general or local, other than those which are or may be imposed upon Transvaal citizens.

ARTICLE XXVII.

All inhabitants of the Transvaal shall have free access to the Courts of Justice for the protection and defence of their rights.

ARTICLE XXVIII.

All persons other than natives who established their domicile in the Transvaal between the 12th day of April 1877, and the date when this Convention comes into effect, and who shall within twelve months after such last-mentioned date have their names registered by the British Resident, shall be exempt from all compulsory military service whatever. The Resident shall notify such registration to the Government of the Transvaal State.

ARTICLE XXIX.

Provision shall hereafter be made by a separate instrument for the mutual extradition of criminals, and also for the surrender of deserters from Her Majesty's forces.

ARTICLE XXX.

All debts contracted since the annexation will be payable in the same currency in which they may have been contracted;

all uncancelled postage and other revenue stamps issued by the Government since the annexation will remain valid, and will be accepted at their present value by the future Government of the State; all licences duly issued since the annexation will remain in force during the period for which they have been issued,

ARTICLE XXXI.

No grants of land which may have been made, and no transfer of mortgage which may have been passed since the annexation, will be invalidated by reason merely of their having been made or passed since that date. All transfers to the British Secretary for Native Affairs in trust for natives will remain in force, the Native Location Commission taking the place of such Secretary for Native Affairs.

ARTICLE XXXII.

This Convention will be ratified by a newly elected Volksraad within the period of three months after its execution, and in default of such ratification this Convention shall be null and void.

ARTICLE XXXIII.

Forthwith, after the ratification of this Convention, as in the last preceding Article mentioned, all British troops in Transvaal territory will leave the same, and the mutual delivery of munitions of war will be carried out. Articles end. Here will follow signatures of Royal Commissioners, then the following to precede signatures of triumvirate.

We, the undersigned, Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger, Martinus Wessel Pretorius, and Petrus Jacobus Joubert, as representatives of the Transvaal Burghers, do hereby agree to all the above conditions, reservations, and limitations under which self-government has been restored to the inhabitants of the Transvaal territory, subject to the suzerainty of Her Majesty, her heirs and successors, and we agree to accept the Government of the said territory, with all rights and obligations thereto appertaining, on the 8th day of August; and we promise and undertake that this Convention shall be ratified by a newly elected Volksraad of the Transvaal State within three months from this date.

LONDON CONVENTION

A CONVENTION BETWEEN HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC

February 1884.

Whereas the Government of the Transvaal State, through its Delegates, consisting of Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger, President of the said State, Stephanus Jacobus Du Toit, Superintendent of Education, and Nicholas Jacobus Smit, a member of the Volksraad, have represented that the Convention signed at Pretoria on the 3rd day of August 1881, and ratified by the Volksraad of the said State on the 25th October 1881, contains certain provisions which are inconvenient, and imposes burdens and obligations from which the said State is desirous to be relieved, and that the south-western boundaries fixed by the said Convention should be amended, with a view to promote the peace and good order of the said State, and of the countries adjacent thereto; and whereas Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland has been pleased to take the said representations into consideration: Now, therefore, Her Majesty has been pleased to direct, and it is hereby declared, that the following articles of a new Convention, signed on behalf of Her Majesty by Her Majesty's High Commissioner in South Africa, the Right Honourable Sir Hercules George Robert Robinson, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Governor of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, and on behalf of the Transvaal State (which shall hereinafter be called the South African Republic) by the above-named Delegates, Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger, Stephanus Jacobus du Toit, and Nicholas Jacobus Smit, shall, when ratified by the Volksraad of the South African Republic, be substituted for the articles embodied in the Convention of 3rd August 1881; which latter, pending such ratification, shall continue in full force and effect.

ARTICLES.

ARTICLE I.

The Territory of the South African Republic will embrace the land lying between the following boundaries, to wit:

Beginning from the point where the north-eastern boundary line of Griqualand West meets the Vaal River, up the course of the Vaal River to the point of junction with it of the Klip River; thence up the course of the Klip River to the point of junction with it of the stream called Gansvlei; thence up the Gansvlei stream to its source in the Drakensberg; thence to a beacon in the boundary of Natal, situated immediately opposite and close to the source of the Gansvlei stream; thence in a north-easterly direction along the ridge of the Drakensberg, dividing the waters flowing into the Gansvlei stream from the waters flowing into the sources of the Buffalo, to a beacon on a point where this mountain ceases to be a continuous chain; thence to a beacon on a plain to the north-east of the last described beacon; thence to the nearest source of a small stream called 'Division Stream'; thence down this division stream, which forms the southern boundary of the farm Sandfontein, the property of Messrs. Meek, to its junction with the Coldstream; thence down the Coldstream to its junction with the Buffalo or Umzinyati River; thence down the course of the Buffalo River to the junction with it of the Blood River; thence up the course of the Blood River to the junction with it of Lyn Spruit or Dudusi; thence up the Dudusi to its source; thence 80 yards to Bea. I., situated on a spur of the N'Qaba-Ka-hawana Mountains; thence 80 yards to the N'Sonto River; thence down the N'Sonto River to its junction with the White Umvulozi River; thence up the White Umvulozi River to a white rock where it rises; thence 800 yards to Kambula Hill (Bea. II.); thence to the source of the Pemvana River, where the road from Kambula Camp to Burgers' Lager crosses; thence down the Pemvana River to its junction with the Bivana River; thence down the Bivana River to its junction with the Pongolo River; thence down the Pongolo River to where it passes through the Libombo Range; thence along the summits of the Libombo Range to the northern point of the N'Yawos Hill in that range (Bea. XVI.); thence to the northern peak of the Inkwakweni Hills (Bea. XV.); thence to Sefunda, a rocky knoll detached from and to the north-east end of the White Koppies, and to the south of the Musana River (Bea. XIX.); thence to a point on the slope near the crest of Matanjeni, which is the name given to the south-eastern portion of the Mahamba Hills (Bea. XIII.); thence to the N'gwangwana, a double-pointed hill (one point

is bare, the other wooded, the beacon being on the former) on the left bank of the Assegai River and upstream of the Dadusa Spruit (Bea. XII.); thence to the southern point of Bendita, a rocky knoll in a plain between the Little Hlozane and Assegai Rivers (Bea. XI.); thence to the highest point of Saluka Hill, round the eastern slopes of which flows the Little Hlozane, also called Ludaka or Mudspruit (Bea. X.); thence to the beacon known as 'Viljoen's,' or N'Duko Hill; thence to a point north-east of Derby House, known as Magwazidili's Beacon; thence to the Igaba, a small knoll on the Ungwempisi River, also called 'Joubert's Beacon,' and known to the natives as 'Piet's Beacon' (Bea. IX.); thence to the highest point of the N'Dhlovudwalili or Houtbosch, a hill on the northern bank of the Umpwempisi River (Bea. VIII.); thence to a beacon on the only flat-topped rock, about 10 feet high and about 30 yards in circumference at its base, situated on the south side of the Lamsamane range of hills, and overlooking the valley of the great Usuto River; this rock being 45 yards north of the road from Camden and Lake Banagher to the forests on the Usuto River (sometimes called Sandhlanas Beacon) (Bea. VII.); thence to the Gulungwana or Ibubulundi, four smooth bare hills, the highest in that neighbourhood, situated to the south of the Umtuli River (Bea. VI.); thence to a flat-topped rock, 8 feet high, on the crest of the Busuku, a low rocky range south-west of the Impulazi River (Bea. V.); thence to a low bare hill on the north-east of, and overlooking the Impulazi River, to the south of it being a tributary of the Impulazi, with a considerable waterfall, and the road from the river passing 200 yards to the north-west of the beacon (Bea. IV.); thence to the highest point of Mapumula range, the watershed of the Little Usuto river on the north, and the Umpulazi River on the south, the hill, the top of which is a bare rock, falling abruptly towards the little Usuto (Bea. III.); thence to the western point of a double-pointed rocky hill, precipitous on all sides, called Makwana, its top being a bare rock (Bea. II.); thence to the top of a rugged hill of considerable height falling abruptly to the Komati River, this hill being the northern extremity of the Isilotwani range, and separated from the highest peak of the range Inkomokazi (a sharp cone) by a deep neck (Bea. I.). (On a ridge in the straight line between Beacons I. and II. is an intermediate beacon.) From Beacon I. the boundary runs to a hill across

the Komati River, and thence along the crest of the range of hills known as the Mokongwa, which runs north-east and south-west, to Kamhlubana Peak; thence in a straight line to Mananga, a point in the Libombo range, and thence to the nearest point in the Portuguese frontier on the Libombo range; thence along the summits of the Libombo range to the middle of the poort where the Komati River passes through it, called the lowest Komati Poort; thence in a north by easterly direction to Pokioens Kop, situated on the north side of the Olifant's River, where it passes through the ridges; thence about north-north-west to the nearest point of Serra di Chicundo; and thence to the junction of the Pafori River with the Limpopo or Crocodile River; thence up the course of the Limpopo River to the point where the Marique River falls into it. Thence up the course of the Marique River to 'Derde Poort,' where it passes through a low range of hills, called Sikwane, a beacon (No. 10) being erected on the spur of said range near to, and westward of, the banks of the river; thence, in a straight line, through this beacon to a beacon (No. 9), erected on the top of the same range, about 1700 yards distant from beacon No. 10; thence, in a straight line, to a beacon (No. 8) erected on the highest point of an isolated hill, called Dikgagong, or 'Wildebeest Kop,' situated south-eastward of, and about 3⅛ miles distant from a high hill, called Moripe; thence, in a straight line, to a beacon (No. 7) erected on the summit of an isolated hill or 'koppie' forming the eastern extremity of the range of hills called Moshwen, situated to the northward of, and about two miles distant from, a large isolated hill called Chukudu-Chochwa; thence, in a straight line, to a beacon (No. 6) erected on the summit of a hill forming part of the same range, Moshweu; thence, in a straight line, to a beacon (No. 5) erected on the summit of a pointed hill in the same range; thence, in a straight line, to a beacon (No. 4) erected on the summit of the western extremity of the same range; thence, in a straight line, to a beacon (No. 3) erected on the summit of the northern extremity of a low, bushy hill or 'koppie' near to and eastward of the Notwane River; thence, in a straight line, to the junction of the stream called Metsi-Mashware with the Notwane River (No. 2); thence up the course of the Notwane River to Sengoma, being the poort where the river passes through the Dwarsberg range; thence, as described in the Award given by Lieutenant-Governor

Keate, dated October 17, 1871, by Pitlanganyane (narrow place), Deboaganka or Schaapkuil, Sibatoul (bare place), and Maclase, to Ramatlabama, a pool on a spruit north of the Molopo River. From Ramatlabama the boundary shall run to the summit of an isolated hill called Leganka; thence, in a straight line, passing north-east of a Native Station, near 'Buurman's Drift,' on the Molopo River, to that point on the road from Mosiega to the old drift, where a road turns out through the Native Station to the new drift below; thence to 'Buurman's Old Drift'; thence, in a straight line, to a marked and isolated clump of trees near to and north-west of the dwelling-house of C. Austin, a tenant on the farm 'Vleifontein,' No. 117; thence, in a straight line, to the north-western corner beacon of the farm 'Mooimeisjesfontein,' No. 30; thence along the western line of the said farm 'Mooimeisjesfontein,' and in prolongation thereof as far as the road leading from 'Ludik's Drift,' on the Molopo River, past the homestead of 'Mooimeisjesfontein,' towards the Salt Pans near Harts River; thence, along the said road, crossing the direct road from Polfontein to Sehuba, and until the direct road from Polfontein to Lotlakane or Pietfontein is reached; thence, along the southern edge of the last-named road towards Lotlakane, until the first garden ground of that station is reached; thence, in a south-westerly direction, skirting Lotlakane, so as to leave it and all its garden ground in native territory, until the road from Lotlakane to Kunana is reached; thence along the east side, and clear of that road towards Kunana, until the garden grounds of that station are reached; thence, skirting Kunana, so as to include it and all its garden ground, but no more, in the Transvaal, until the road from Kunana to Mamusa is reached; thence, along the eastern side and clear of the road towards Mamusa, until a road turns out towards Taungs; thence, along the eastern side and clear of the road towards Taungs, till the line of the district known as 'Stellaland' is reached, about 11 miles from Taungs; thence along the line of the district Stellaland to the Harts River, about 24 miles below Mamusa; thence, across Harts River, to the junction of the roads from Monthe and Phokwane; thence, along the western side and clear of the nearest road towards 'Koppie Enkel,' an isolated hill about 36 miles from Mamusa, and about 18 miles north of Christiana, and to the summit of the said hill; thence, in a straight

line, to that point on the north-east boundary of Griqualand West as beaconed by Mr. Surveyor Ford, where two farms, registered as Nos. 72 and 75, do meet, about midway between the Vaal and Harts Rivers, measured along the said boundary of Griqualand West; thence to the first point where the north-east boundary of Griqualand West meets the Vaal River.

ARTICLE II.

The Government of the South African Republic will strictly adhere to the boundaries defined in the first Article of this Convention, and will do its utmost to prevent any of its inhabitants from making any encroachments upon lands beyond the said boundaries. The Government of the South African Republic will appoint Commissioners upon the eastern and western borders, whose duty it will be strictly to guard against irregularities and all trespassing over the boundaries. Her Majesty's Government will, if necessary, appoint Commissioners in the native territories outside the eastern and western borders of the South African Republic to maintain order and prevent encroachments.

Her Majesty's Government and the Government of the South African Republic will each appoint a person to proceed together to beacon off the amended south-west boundary as described in Article 1 of this Convention; and the President of the Orange Free State shall be requested to appoint a referee to whom the said persons shall refer any questions on which they may disagree respecting the interpretation of the said Article, and the decision of such referee thereon shall be final. The arrangement already made, under the terms of Article 19 of the Convention of Pretoria, of the 3rd August, 1881, between the owners of the farms Grootfontein and Valleifontein on the one hand, and the Barolong authorities on the other, by which a fair share of the water-supply of the said farms shall be allowed to flow undisturbed to the said Barolongs, shall continue in force.

ARTICLE III.

If a British officer is appointed to reside at Pretoria or elsewhere within the South African Republic to discharge functions analogous to those of a Consular officer, he will receive the protection and assistance of the Republic.

ARTICLE IV.

The South African Republic will conclude no treaty or engagement with any State or nation other than the Orange Free State, nor with any native tribe to the eastward or westward of the Republic, until the same has been approved by Her Majesty the Queen.

Such approval shall be considered to have been granted if Her Majesty's Government shall not, within six months after receiving a copy of such treaty (which shall be delivered to them immediately upon its completion), have notified that the conclusion of such treaty is in conflict with the interests of Great Britain or of any of Her Majesty's possessions in South Africa.

ARTICLE V.

The South African Republic will be liable for any balance which may still remain due of the debts for which it was liable at the date of Annexation—to wit, the Cape Commercial Bank Loan, the Railway Loan, and the Orphan Chamber Debt—which debts will be a first charge upon the revenues of the Republic. The South African Republic will, moreover, be liable to Her Majesty's Government for £250,000, which will be a second charge upon the revenues of the Republic.

ARTICLE VI.

The debt due as aforesaid by the South African Republic to Her Majesty's Government will bear interest at the rate of three and a half per cent. from the date of the ratification of this Convention, and shall be repayable by a payment for interest and Sinking Fund of six pounds and ninepence per £100 per annum, which will extinguish the debt in twenty-five years. The said payment of six pounds and ninepence per £100 shall be payable half-yearly in British currency at the close of each half-year from the date of such ratification: Provided always that the South African Republic shall be at liberty at the close of any half-year to pay off the whole or any portion of the outstanding debt.

Interest at the rate of three and a half per cent. on the debt as standing under the Convention of Pretoria shall as heretofore be paid to the date of the ratification of this Convention.

ARTICLE VII.

All persons who held property in the Transvaal on the 8th

day of August 1881, and still hold the same, will continue to enjoy the rights of property which they have enjoyed since the 12th April 1877. No person who has remained loyal to Her Majesty during the late hostilities shall suffer any molestation by reason of his loyalty; or be liable to any criminal prosecution or civil action for any part taken in connection with such hostilities; and all such persons will have full liberty to reside in the country, with enjoyment of all civil rights, and protection for their persons and property.

ARTICLE VIII.

The South African Republic renews the declaration made in the Sand River Convention, and in the Convention of Pretoria, that no slavery or apprenticeship partaking of slavery will be tolerated by the Government of the said Republic.

ARTICLE IX.

There will continue to be complete freedom of religion and protection from molestation for all denominations, provided the same be not inconsistent with morality and good order; and no disability shall attach to any person in regard to rights of property by reason of the religious opinions which he holds.

ARTICLE X.

The British Officer appointed to reside in the South African Republic will receive every assistance from the Government of the said Republic in making due provision for the proper care and preservation of the graves of such of Her Majesty's Forces as have died in the Transvaal; and, if need be, for the appropriation of land for the purpose.

ARTICLE XI.

All grants or titles issued at any time by the Transvaal Government in respect of land outside the boundary of the South African Republic, as defined in Article I., shall be considered invalid and of no effect, except in so far as any such grant or title relates to land that falls within the boundary of the South African Republic; and all persons holding any such grant so considered invalid and of no effect will receive from the Government of the South African Republic such compensation, either in land or in money, as the Volksraad shall determine. In all cases in which any Native Chiefs or

other authorities outside the said boundaries have received any adequate consideration from the Government of the South African Republic for land excluded from the Transvaal by the first Article of this Convention, or where permanent improvements have been made on the land, the High Commissioner will recover from the native authorities fair compensation for the loss of the land thus excluded, or of the permanent improvements thereon.

ARTICLE XII.

The independence of the Swazis, within the boundary line of Swaziland, as indicated in the first Article of this Convention, will be fully recognised.

ARTICLE XIII.

Except in pursuance of any treaty or engagement made as provided in Article 4 of this Convention, no other or higher duties shall be imposed on the importation into the South African Republic of any article coming from any part of Her Majesty's dominions than are or may be imposed on the like article coming from any other place or country; nor will any prohibition be maintained or imposed on the importation into the South African Republic of any article coming from any part of Her Majesty's dominions which shall not equally extend to the like article coming from any other place or country. And in like manner the same treatment shall be given to any article coming to Great Britain from the South African Republic as to the like article coming from any other place or country.

These provisions do not preclude the consideration of special arrangements as to import duties and commercial relations between the South African Republic and any of Her Majesty's colonies or possessions.

ARTICLE XIV.

All persons, other than natives, conforming themselves to the laws of the South African Republic (*a*) will have full liberty, with their families, to enter, travel, or reside in any part of the South African Republic; (*b*) they will be entitled to hire or possess houses, manufactories, warehouses, shops, and premises; (*c*) they may carry on their commerce either in person or by any agents whom they may think fit to employ; (*d*) they will not be subject, in respect of their persons or

property, or in respect of their commerce or industry, to any taxes, whether general or local, other than those which are or may be imposed upon citizens of the said Republic.

ARTICLE XV.

All persons, other than natives, who established their domicile in the Transvaal between the 12th day of April 1877, and the 8th August 1881, and who within twelve months after such last-mentioned date have had their names registered by the British Resident, shall be exempt from all compulsory military service whatever.

ARTICLE XVI.

Provision shall hereafter be made by a separate instrument for the mutual extradition of criminals, and also for the surrender of deserters from Her Majesty's Forces.

ARTICLE XVII.

All debts contracted between the 12th April 1877, and the 8th August 1881, will be payable in the same currency in which they may have been contracted.

ARTICLE XVIII.

No grants of land which may have been made, and no transfers or mortgages which may have been passed between the 12th April 1877, and the 8th August 1881, will be invalidated by reason merely of their having been made or passed between such dates.

All transfers to the British Secretary for Native Affairs in trust for natives will remain in force, an officer of the South African Republic taking the place of such Secretary for Native Affairs.

ARTICLE XIX.

The Government of the South African Republic will engage faithfully to fulfil the assurances given, in accordance with the laws of the South African Republic, to the natives at the Pretoria Pitso by the Royal Commission in the presence of the Triumvirate and with their entire assent, (1) as to the freedom of the natives to buy or otherwise acquire land under certain conditions, (2) as to the appointment of a commission to mark out native locations, (3) as to the access of the natives to the courts of law, and (4) as to their being

allowed to move freely within the country, or to leave it for any legal purpose, under a pass system.

ARTICLE XX.

This Convention will be ratified by a Volksraad of the South African Republic within the period of six months after its execution, and in default of such ratification this Convention shall be null and void.

Signed in duplicate in London this 27th day of February 1884.

HERCULES ROBINSON.
S. J. P. KRUGER.
S. J. DU TOIT.
N. J. SMIT.

APPENDIX B

MANIFESTO OF THE NATIONAL UNION

If I am deeply sensible of the honour conferred upon me by being elected Chairman of the National Union, I am profoundly impressed with the responsibilities attached to the position. The issues to be faced in this country are so momentous in character that it has been decided that prior to the holding of a public meeting a review of the condition of affairs should be placed in your hands, in order that you may consider matters quietly in your homes. It has also been decided that it will be wise to postpone the meeting which was to have taken place on the 27th December until the 6th day of January next.

On that day you will have made up your minds on the various points submitted to you, and we will ask you for direction as to our future course of action. It is almost unnecessary to recount all the steps which have been taken by the National Union, and I shall therefore confine myself to a very short review of what has been done.

THE THREE PLANKS.

The constitution of the National Union is very simple.

The three objects which we set before ourselves are: (1) The maintenance of the independence of the Republic, (2) the securing of equal rights, and (3) the redress of grievances. This brief but comprehensive programme has never been lost sight of, and I think we may challenge contradiction fearlessly when we assert that we have constitutionally, respectfully, and steadily prosecuted our purpose. Last year, you will remember, a respectful petition, praying for the franchise, signed by 13,000 men, was received with contemptuous laughter and jeers in the Volksraad. This year the Union, apart from smaller matters, endeavoured to do three things.

The Raad Elections.

First we were told that a Progressive spirit was abroad, that twelve out of twenty-four members of the First Volksraad had to be elected, and we might reasonably hope for reform by the type of broad-minded men who would be elected. It was therefore resolved that we should do everything in our power to assist in the election of the best men who were put up by the constituencies, and everything that the law permitted us to do in this direction was done.

Disappointed Hopes.

The result has been only too disappointing, as the record of the debates and the division list in the Volksraad prove. We were, moreover, told that public speeches in Johannesburg prevented the Progressive members from getting a majority of the Raad to listen to our requests, that angry passions were inflamed, and that if we would only hold our tongues reform would be brought about. We therefore resolved in all loyalty to abstain from inflaming angry passions, although we never admitted we had by act or speech given reason for legislators to refuse justice to all. Hence our silence for a long time.

The Railway Concession Next.

We used all our influence to get the Volksraad to take over the railway concession, but, alas! the President declared with tears in his voice that the independence of the country was wrapped up in this question, and a submissive Raad swept the petitions from the table.

The Franchise Petition.

Our great effort, however, was the petition for the

franchise, with the moderate terms of which you are all acquainted. This petition was signed by more than 38,000 persons. What was the result? We were called unfaithful for not naturalising ourselves, when naturalisation means only that we should give up our original citizenship and get nothing in return, and become subject to disabilities. Members had the calm assurance to state, without any grounds whatever, that the signatures were forgeries; and, worst of all, one member in an inflammatory speech challenged us openly to fight for our rights, and his sentiment seemed to meet with considerable approval. This is the disappointing result of our honest endeavours to bring about a fusion between the people of this State, and the true union and equality which alone can be the basis of prosperity and peace. You all know that as the law now stands we are virtually excluded for ever from getting the franchise, and by a malignant ingenuity our children born here are deprived of the rights of citizenship unless their fathers take an oath of allegiance, which brings them nothing but disabilities.

The Bitter Cry of the 'Uitlander.'

We are the vast majority in this State. We own more than half the land, and, taken in the aggregate, we own at least nine-tenths of the property in this country; yet in all matters affecting our lives, our liberties, and our properties, we have absolutely no voice. Dealing now first with the legislature, we find taxation is imposed upon us without any representation whatever; that taxation is wholly inequitable, (*a*) because a much greater amount is levied from the people than is required for the needs of Government; (*b*) because it is either class taxation pure and simple, or by the selection of the subjects, though nominally universal, it is made to fall upon our shoulders; and (*c*) because the necessaries of life are unduly burdened.

Abuse of Public Expenditure.

Expenditure is not controlled by any public official independent of the Government. Vast sums are squandered, while the Secret Service Fund is a dark mystery to everybody. But, essential as the power to control taxation and expenditure is to a free people, there are other matters of the gravest importance which are equally precious. The Legisla-

ture in this country is the supreme power, apparently uncontrolled by any fixed Constitution. The chance will of a majority in a Legislature elected by one-third of the people is capable of dominating us in every relation of life; and when we remember that those who hold power belong to a different race, speak a different language, and have different pursuits from ourselves, that they regard us with suspicion and even hostility, that, as a rule, they are not educated men, and that their passions are played upon by unscrupulous adventurers, it must be admitted that we are in a very grave danger.

Tribute to the Moderates.

I think it is but just to bear tribute to the patriotic endeavours of a small band of enlightened men in the Volksraad who have earnestly condemned the policy of the Government and warned them of its danger. To Mr. Jeppe, Mr. Lucas Meyer, the De Jagers, Mr. Loveday, and a few others in the First Raad, leaving out the Second Raad, we owe our best thanks, for they have fought our battle and confirmed the justice of our cause. But when we look to the debates of the last few years, what do we find? All through a spirit of hostility, all through an endeavour not to meet the just wants of the people, not to remove grievances, not to establish the claim to our loyalty by just treatment and equal laws, but to repress the publication of the truth, however much it might be required in the public interest, to prevent us from holding public meetings, to interfere with the Courts, and to keep us in awe by force.

The Powers of the Executive.

There is now threatened a danger even graver than those which have preceded it. The Government is seeking to get through the Legislature an Act which will vest in the Executive the power to decide whether men have been guilty of sedition, and to deport them and confiscate their goods. The Volksraad has by resolution affirmed the principle, and has instructed the Government to bring up a Bill accordingly next session. To-day this power rests justly with the courts of law; and I can only say that, if this Bill becomes law, the power of the Executive Government of this country would be as absolute as the power of the Czar of Russia. We shall have said good-bye finally to the last principle of liberty.

President Kruger Indicted.

Coming to the Executive Government, we find that there is no true responsibility to the people, none of the great departments of State are controlled by Ministerial officers in the proper sense, the President's will is virtually supreme, and he, with his unique influence over the legislators of the House, State-aided by an able, if hostile, State Secretary, has been the author of every act directed against the liberties of the people. It is well that this should be recognised. It is well that President Kruger should be known for what he is, and that once for all the false pedestal on which he has so long stood should be destroyed. I challenge contradiction when I state that no important Act has found a place on the Statute-book during the last ten years without the seal of President Kruger's will upon it; nay, he is the father of every such Act. Remember that all legislation is initiated by the Government, and, moreover, President Kruger has expressly supported every Act by which we and our children have been deprived by progressive steps of the right to acquire franchise, by which taxation has been imposed upon us almost exclusively, and by which the right and the liberty of the Press and the right of public meeting have been attacked.

The Judges and the Liberty of the Subject.

Now we come to the judicial system. The High Court of this country has, in the absence of representation, been the sole guardian of our liberties. Although it has on the whole done its work ably, affairs are in a very unsatisfactory position. The judges have been underpaid, their salaries have never been secure, the most undignified treatment has been meted out to them, and the status and the independence of the Bench have on more than one occasion been attacked. A deliberate attempt was made two years ago by President Kruger and the Government to reduce the bench to a position subordinate to the Executive Government, and only recently we had in the Witfontein matter the last of the cases in which the Legislature interfered with vested rights of action. The administration of justice by minor officials, by native commissioners, and by field-cornets, has produced, and is producing, the gravest unrest in the country; and, lastly, gentlemen,

THE GREAT BULWARK OF LIBERTY,

the right to trial by jurymen who are our peers, is denied to us. Only the burgher or naturalised burgher is entitled to be a juryman; or, in other words, any one of us is liable to be tried upon the gravest charge possible by jurymen who are in no sense our peers, who belong to a different race, who regard us with a greater or lesser degree of hostility, and whose passions, if inflamed, might prompt them, as weak human creatures, to inflict the gravest injustice, even to deprive men of their lives. Supposing, in the present tense condition of political feeling, any one of us were tried before a Boer jury on any charge having a political flavour about it, should we be tried by our peers, and should we have a chance of receiving even-handed justice?

THE SECRET SERVICE FUND.

When we come to the Administration, we find that there is the grossest extravagance, that Secret Service moneys are squandered, that votes are exceeded, that the public credit is pledged, as it was pledged in the case of the Netherlands Railway Company, and later still in the case of the Selati Railway, in a manner which is wholly inconsistent with the best interests of the people.

SQUANDERING THE PUBLIC REVENUE.

The Delagoa Bay festivities are an instance of a reckless disregard of a Parliamentary vote; £20,000 was voted for those useless festivities—about £60,000 was really expended, and I believe certain favoured gentlemen hailing from Holland derived the principal benefit. It is said that £400,000 of our money has been transferred for some extraordinary purpose to Holland. Recently £17,000 is said to have been sent out of the country with Dr. Leyds for Secret Service purposes, and the public audit seems a farce. When the Progressive members endeavoured to get an explanation about large sums of money, they were silenced by a vote of the majority prompted by President Kruger. The administration of the public service is in a scandalous condition.

A CORRUPT LEGISLATURE.

Bribery and corruption are rampant. We have had members of the Raad accepting presents of imported spiders and watches wholesale from men who were applying for con-

cessions, and we have the singular fact that in every instance the recipient of the gift voted for the concession. We have the President openly stating that such acceptance of presents was wholly moral. We have a condition of affairs in which the time of the meeting of the Volksraad is looked upon as the period of the greatest danger to our interests, and it is an open secret that a class of man has sprung up who is in constant attendance upon the members of the Volksraad, and whose special business appears to be the 'influencing' of members one way or the other. It is openly stated that enormous sums of money have been spent, some to produce illegitimate results, some to guard against fresh attacks upon vested rights. The Legislature passed an Act solemnly denouncing corruption in the public service. One man, not an official, was punished under the law, but nothing has ever been done since to eradicate the evil.

And a Tainted Civil Service.

I think thousands of you are satisfied of the venality of many of our public servants. I wish to guard against the assumption that all public servants are corrupt. Thank God there are many who are able and honourable men, and it must be gall and wormwood to these men to find the whole tone of the service destroyed, and to have themselves made liable to be included under one general denunciation. But there can be no health in an administration, and the public morals must be sapped also, when such things as the Smit case and the recent Stiemens case go unnoticed and unpunished.

Two Glaring Cases.

I think it right to state openly what those cases are. N. J. Smit is the son of a member of the Government. He absented himself for months without leave. He was meantime charged in the newspapers with embezzlement. He returned, was fined £25 for being absent without leave, and was reinstated in office. He is now the Mining Commissioner of Klerksdorp. He has been charged in at least two newspapers—one of them a Dutch newspaper, *Land en Volk*, published within a stone's-throw of the Government Office—with being an 'unpunished thief,' and yet the Government have taken no notice of it, nor has he thought fit to bring an action to clear himself. In the Stiemens case two officials in

the Mining Department admitted in the witness-box that they had agreed to further the application of a relative for the grant of a piece of public land at Johannesburg on condition that they were each to receive one quarter of the proceeds. A third official, the Landdrost of Pretoria, admitted that he had received £300 for his 'influence' in furthering the application; yet no notice had been taken by the Government of their scandalous conduct, and, sad to say, judges who heard the case did not think it their duty to comment strongly upon the matter. I have in my possession now a notarial deed which proves that the Railway Commissioner, the Landdrost, and the Commandant of Pretoria are members of a syndicate whose avowed object is, or was, to wrest from the companies their right to the 'bewaarplaatsen.' This shows what is going on, and what is the measure of safety of title to property. Those who should guard our rights are our worst enemies. In a law introduced by the present Government, the Government, instead of the Courts, are the final judges in cases of disputed elections. No Election Committees are allowed. This operates against candidates opposed to the Government, because the Government has virtually a vast standing army of committee men, henchmen, officials being allowed openly to take part in swaying elections, and the Government being in a position, by the distribution of contracts, appointments, purchase of concessions, the expenditure of Secret Service money and otherwise, to bring into existence and maintain a large number of supporters who act as canvassers always on the right side in times of elections.

Native Affairs.

The administration of native affairs is a gross scandal and a source of immense loss and danger to the community. Native Commissioners have been permitted to practise extortion, injustice, and cruelty upon the natives under their jurisdiction. The Government has allowed petty tribes to be goaded into rebellion. We have had to pay the costs of the 'wars,' while the wretched victims of their policy have had their tribes broken up, sources of native labour have been destroyed, and large numbers of prisoners have been kept in gaol for something like eighteen months without trial. It was stated in the newspapers that, out of sixty-three men imprisoned, thirty-one had died in that period,

while the rest were languishing to death for want of vegetable food. We have had revelations of repulsive cruelty on the part of field-cornets. We all remember the Rachmann case, and the April case, in which the judges found field-cornets guilty of brutal conduct to unfortunate natives; but the worst features about these cases is that the Government has set the seal of its approval upon the acts of these officials by paying the costs of the actions out of public funds, and the President of the State a few days ago made the astounding statement in regard to the April case, that, notwithstanding the judgment of the High Court, the Government thought that Prinsloo was right in his action, and therefore paid the costs. The Government is enforcing the 'plakkerswet,' which forbids the locating of more than five families on one farm. The field-cornets in various districts have recently broken up homes of large numbers of natives settled on 'Uitlanders'' lands, just at the time when they had sown their crops to provide the next winter's food. The application of this law is most uneven, as large numbers of natives are left on the farms of the Boers. Quite recently a well-known citizen brought into the country at great expense some hundreds of families, provided them with land, helped them to start life, stipulating only that he should be able to draw from amongst them labour at a fair wage to develop his properties. Scarcely had they been settled when the field-cornet came down and scattered the people, distributing them among Boer farms. The sources of the native labour-supply have been seriously interfered with at the borders by Government measures, and difficulties have been placed in the way of transport of natives by railway to the mines. These things are all a drain upon us as a State, and many of them are a burning disgrace to us as a people.

The Education Scandal.

The great public that subscribes the bulk of the revenue is virtually denied all benefit of State aid in education. There has been a deliberate attempt to Hollanderise the Republic, and to kill the English language. Thousands of children are growing up in this land in ignorance, unfitted to run the race of life, and there is the possibility that a large number of them will develop into criminals. We have had to tax ourselves privately to guard against these dangers, and the iniquity of denying education to the children of men who are

paying taxes is so manifest that I pass on with mingled feelings of anger and disgust.

Railways.

This important branch of the public service is entirely in the hands of a corporation domiciled in Holland. This corporation holds a concession, of course under which not only was there no adequate control over expenditure in construction, but it is entitled to charge and is charging us outrageous tariffs. How outrageous these are will be seen from the admission made by Mr. Middelberg that the short section of 10 miles between Boksburg and Krugersdorp is paying more than the interest on the cost of the construction of the whole line of railway to Delagoa Bay. To add these to its general revenue, of which 10 per cent. is set aside as a sinking fund, and then to take for itself 15 per cent. of the balance, the Company reports annually to the Raad from Amsterdam in a language which is practically foreign to it, and makes up its accounts in guelders, a coinage which our legislators, I venture to say, know nothing of; and this is independence. We are liable as guarantors for the whole of the debt. Lines have been built entirely on our credit, and yet we have no say and no control over these important public works beyond the show of control which is supposed to be exercised by the present Railway Commissioner. The Company, in conjunction with the Executive Government, is in a position to control our destinies to an enormous extent, to influence our relations internally and externally, to bring about such friction with the neighbouring States as to set the whole of South Africa in tumult. Petitions have been presented to the Raad, but the President has constantly brushed these aside with the well-worn argument that the independence of the State is involved in the matter. It is involved in the matter, as all who remember the recent Drifts question will admit. I have been told that it is dangerous for the country to take over the railway, because it would afford such an immense field for corruption. Surely this is the strongest condemnation of the Government by its friends, for if it is not fit to run a railway, how can it be fit to manage a whole State? The powers controlling this railway are flooding the public service with Hollanders to the exclusion of our own people, and I may here say that in the most important departments of the State we are being controlled by the

gentlemen from the Low Country. While the innocent Boer hugs to himself the delusion that he is preserving his independence, they control us politically through Dr. Leyds, financially through the Netherlands Railway, educationally through Dr. Mansvelt, and in the Department of Justice through Dr. Coster.

Custom and Trade.

The policy of the Government in regard to taxation may be practically described as protection without production. The most monstrous hardships result to consumers, and merchants can scarcely say from day to day where they are. Twice now has the Government entered into competition with traders who have paid their licences and rents and who keep staffs. Recently grain became scarce. The Government were petitioned to suspend the duties, which are cruelly high, in order to assist the mining industry to feed its labourers. The Government refused this request on the plea that it was not in a position to suspend duties without the permission of the Volksraad, and yet within a few days we find that the Government has granted a concession to one of its friends to import grain free of duty and to sell it in competition with the merchants who have had to pay duties. I do not attempt to deal with this important question adequately, but give this example to show how the Government regards the rights of traders.

Monopolies.

It has been the steady policy of the Government to grant concessions. No sooner does any commodity become absolutely essential to the community than some harpy endeavours to get a concession for its supply. There is scarcely a commodity or a right which has not been made the subject of an application for the grant of a concession. We all remember the bread and jam concession, the water concession, the electric lighting concession, and many others, but I need only point to the dynamite concession to show how these monopolies tend to paralyse our industries. There may be some of you who have not yet heard, and some who have forgotten, the facts connected with this outrage upon public rights.

Story of the Dynamite Concession.

Some years ago Mr. Lippert got a concession for the sole

right to manufacture and sell dynamite and all other explosives. He was to manufacture the dynamite in this country. For years he imported dynamite under the name of Guhr Impregne duty free. He never manufactured dynamite in the country, and upon public exposure the Government was compelled to cancel the concession, the President himself denouncing the action of the concessionnaire as fraudulent. For a time we breathed freely, thinking we were rid of this incubus, but within a few months the Government granted virtually to the same people another concession, under which they are now taking from the pockets of the public £600,000 per annum, and this is a charge which will go on growing should the mining industry survive the persistent attempts to strangle it. How a body charged with the public interests could be parties to this scandalous fleecing of the public passes comprehension. Then, the curious feature about the matter is that the Government gets some petty fraction of this vast sum, and the concessionnaires have on this plea obtained enormous advances of public moneys from the Government, without security, to carry on their trade. Shortly, the concessionnaires are entitled to charge ninety shillings a case for dynamite, while it could be bought, if there were no concession, for about thirty shillings a case. It may be stated incidentally that Mr. Wolmarans, a member of the Government, has been for years challenged to deny that he is enjoying a royalty of two shillings on every case of dynamite sold, and that he has up to the present moment neglected to take up the challenge. Proper municipal government is denied to us, and we all know how much this means in regard to health, comfort, and the value of property. The Statute Books are disfigured with enactments imposing religious disabilities; and the English language—the language spoken by the great bulk of the people—is denied all official recognition. The natural result of the existing condition of things is that the true owners of the mines are those who have invested no capital in them—the Government, the railway concessionnaires, the dynamite concessionnaires, and others. The country is rich, and under proper government could be developed marvellously, but it cannot stand the drain of the present exactions. We have lived largely upon foreign capital, and the total amount of the dividends available for shareholders in companies is ridiculously small as compared with the aggregate amount of capital invested in mining ventures. Some day the inevitable

result upon our credit and upon our trade will be forced upon us.

Hatred of the Saxon.

There is no disguising the fact that the original policy of the Government is based upon intense hostility to the English-speaking population, and that even against the enfranchised burgher of this State there is the determination to retain all power in the hands of those who are enjoying the sweets of office now, and naturally the grateful crowd of relations and friends and henchmen ardently support the existing régime; but there are unmistakable signs, and the President fears that the policy which he has hitherto adopted will not be sufficient to keep in check the growing population. It seems the set purpose of Government to repress the growth of the industry, to tax it at every turn, to prevent the working classes from settling here and making their homes and surrounding themselves with their families; and there is no mistaking the significance of the action of the President when he opposed the throwing open of the town lands of Pretoria on the ground that 'he might have a second Johannesburg there,' nor that of his speech upon the motion for the employment of diamond drills to prospect Government lands, which he opposed hotly on the ground that 'there is too much gold here already.'

The Policy of Force.

We now have openly the policy of force revealed to us. £250,000 is to be spent upon the completing a fort at Pretoria, £100,000 is to be spent upon a fort to terrorise the inhabitants of Johannesburg, large orders are sent to Krupp's for big guns, Maxims have been ordered, and we are even told that German officers are coming out to drill the burghers. Are these things necessary, or are they calculated to irritate the feeling to breaking point? What necessity is there for forts in peaceful inland towns? Why should the Government endeavour to keep us in subjection to unjust laws by the power of the sword instead of making themselves live in the heart of the people by a broad policy of justice? What can be said of a policy which deliberately divides the two great sections of the people from each other instead of uniting them under equal laws, or the policy which keeps us in eternal turmoil with the neighbouring States? What shall be said

of the statecraft, every act of which shows torments, discontent, or race hatred, and reveals a conception of republicanism under which the only privilege of the majority of the people is to provide the revenue, and to bear insult, while only those are considered Republicans who speak a certain language, and in greater or less degree share the prejudices of the ruling classes?

A Stirring Peroration.

I think this policy can never succeed, unless men are absolutely bereft of every quality which made their forefathers free men; unless we have fallen so low that we are prepared to forget honour, self-respect, and our duty to our children. Once more, I wish to state again in unmistakable language what has been so frequently stated in perfect sincerity before, that we desire an independent republic which shall be a true republic, in which every man who is prepared to take the oath of allegiance to the State shall have equal rights, in which our children shall be brought up side by side as united members of a strong commonwealth; that we are animated by no race hatred, that we desire to deprive no man, be his nationality what it may, of any right.

The Charter of the Union.

We have now only two questions to consider: (*a*) What do we want? (*b*) How shall we get it? I have stated plainly what our grievances are, and I shall answer with equal directness the question, 'What do we want?' We want: (1) the establishment of this Republic as a true Republic; (2) a Grondwet or Constitution which shall be framed by competent persons selected by representatives of the whole people and framed on lines laid down by them—a Constitution which shall be safeguarded against hasty alteration; (3) an equitable franchise law, and fair representation; (4) equality of the Dutch and English languages; (5) responsibility of the Legislature to the heads of the great departments; (6) removal of religious disabilities; (7) independence of the courts of justice, with adequate and secured remuneration of the judges; (8) liberal and comprehensive education; (9) efficient civil service, with adequate provision for pay and pension; (10) free trade in South African products. That is what we want. There now remains the question which is to

be put before you at the meeting of January 6, viz., How shall we get it? To this question I shall expect from you an answer in plain terms according to your deliberate judgment.

CHARLES LEONARD,
Chairman of the Transvaal National Union.

APPENDIX C

DESPATCHES FROM LORD ROBERTS AND LORD METHUEN*

MAJESFONTEIN

War Office, March 16th, 1900.

The following Despatch has been received from Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, V.C., G.C.B., etc., Commanding-in-Chief, South Africa:—

FROM FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ROBERTS TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR

Army Headquarters, South Africa,
Camp, Jacobsdal, February 17th, 1900.

MY LORD,

1. I have the honour to forward a despatch, which Lieutenant-General Lord Methuen has prepared on the action at Magersfontein, on the 10th and 11th December 1899.

2. Lord Methuen has been requested to expedite the submission of the complete list of the officers and men belonging to the Black Watch, whom he considers worthy of special mention. I have, etc., ROBERTS, Field-Marshal,
Commanding-in-Chief, South Africa.

Modder River Camp, February 15th, 1900.

SIR,

1. I have the honour to inform you that any further advance by the railway was out of the question, owing to the large kopjes on either side, which had been strongly entrenched. Besides, there was not sufficient water by that route to Kimberley.

* From *The Times*, Saturday, March 17, 1900.

2. Anticipating my possible advance along the Modder River, the enemy had entrenched a very strong position running north-west.

3. The northern portion of the position consists of a kopje about three miles long, the southern end terminating in a high hill which is the key of the position. From the south end of this kopje an underfeature, covered with low bush, extends about five miles to the Modder River. This portion of the position was also entrenched.

4. So long as this kopje, named Majesfontein, remained in possession of the enemy I did not feel justified with my small force in marching up the Modder River, for my line of communication would have been in danger, and my transport could only carry five days' provisions. Had I marched round by Jacobsdal to Brown's Drift, I should have had to fight my way across the river in the face of a mobile force consisting of 16,000 men.

5. Had I elected to fight my way through the bushy ground with small slope between Majesfontein and the Modder River, I should have incurred very heavy loss, and, in addition to the guns not being able to render me very great assistance, they would run a good chance of being captured.

6. In any case I had to be prepared for a second heavy action at Spytfontein, and a blow dealt to the enemy's centre at Majesfontein would render any future fight at Spytfontein easier than any success on their left flank could have done.

7. The reconnaissance work had been extremely difficult on account of the large amount of wire between the two rivers, whilst on the north side of the Modder, owing to the enemy's entrenchments, the cavalry had not been able to advance any great distance.

8. My orders were to relieve Kimberley, and the longer I remained inactive the stronger the enemy would become in my front. Therefore, on the day my last reinforcement arrived, I decided to continue my advance to Kimberley and attack the Majesfontein kopje.

9. With this purpose I gave orders for the kopje to be bombarded from 4.50 P.M. to 6.40 P.M. on the 10th December with all my guns, including the naval 4·7 inch.

10. At daybreak on 11th December the southern end of the kopje was to be assaulted by the Highland Brigade, supported by all the guns, their right and rear being protected by the Guards Brigade.

11. Judging from the moral effect produced by the guns in my three previous actions, and the additional anticipated effect of lyddite, I expected great destruction of life in the trenches, and a considerable demoralising effect on the enemy's nerves, thereby indirectly assisting the attack at daybreak.

12. In accordance with the orders issued, of which I attach a copy, the Artillery on the 10th fired with accuracy and effect on the kopje and the trenches at the foot from 4.30 P.M. to 6.45 P.M.

13. The night march was ordered for 12.30 A.M., the bearings and distance having been ascertained at great personal risk by Major Benson, Royal Artillery, my Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General (A). The distance is two-and-a-half miles, and daybreak was due at 3.25 A.M.

14. About half-an-hour after the Highland Brigade marched off it came on to pour, a heavy thunderstorm accompanying the rain. The downpour lasted until daybreak.

15. The Brigade was led with perfect accuracy to the point of assault by Major Benson. The advance was slow, even for a night march. Major Benson, with a compass in each hand, had frequently to halt on account of the lightning and rifles affecting the compasses.

16. I may remark that two rifles went off by accident before the march commenced, and, it is pretty clear, flashes from a lantern gave the enemy timely notice of the march.

17. Before moving off Major-General Wauchope explained all he intended to do, and the particular part each battalion of his brigade was to play in the scheme. Namely, that he intended to march direct on the south-west spur of the kopje, and on arrival near the objective before daybreak, the Black Watch were to move to the east of the kopje, where he believed the enemy to be posted under shelter, whilst the Seaforth Highlanders were to march straight to the south-east point of the kopje, with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders prolonging the line to the left, the Highland Light Infantry to be in reserve until the action was developed.

The Brigade was to march in mass of quarter-columns, the four battalions keeping touch, and, if necessary, ropes were to be used for the left guides; these ropes were taken; but, I believe, used by only two battalions.

The three battalions were to extend just before daybreak, two companies in firing line, two companies in support, and

four companies in reserve, all at five paces interval between them.

18. What happened was as follows:—Not finding any signs of the enemy on the right flank just before daybreak, which took place at 4 A.M., as the Brigade was approaching the foot of the kopje, Major-General Wauchope gave the order for the Black Watch to extend, but to direct its advance on the spur in front, the Seaforth Highlanders to prolong to the left, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders to prolong to the right, the Highland Light Infantry in reserve. Five minutes earlier (the kopje looming in the distance), Major Benson had asked Major-General Wauchope if he did not consider it to be time to deploy. Lieutenant-Colonel Hughes-Hallett states that the extension could have taken place 200 yards sooner, but the leading battalion got thrown into confusion in the dark by a very thick bit of bush about 20 to 30 yards long. The Seaforth Highlanders went round this bush to the right, and had just got into its original position behind the Black Watch, when the order to extend was given by Major-General Wauchope to the Black Watch. The Seaforth Highlanders, and two companies of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders were also moving out, and were in the act of extending, when suddenly a heavy fire was poured in by the enemy, most of the bullets going over the men.

Lieutenant-Colonel Hughes-Hallett at once ordered the Seaforths to fix bayonets and charge the position.

The officers commanding the other battalions acted in a similar manner. At this moment some one gave the word 'Retire.' Part of the Black Watch then rushed back through the ranks of the Seaforths. Lieutenant-Colonel Hallett ordered his men to halt and lie down, and not to retire. It was now becoming quite light, and some of the Black Watch were a little in front, to the left of the Seaforths.

19. The Artillery, advancing to the support of the attack, had opened fire from the time it was light enough to see.

20. No orders having been received by the Seaforths, the commanding officer advanced the leading units to try and reach the trenches, which were about 400 yards off; but the officers and half the men fell before a very heavy fire, which opened as soon as the men moved. About ten minutes later the Seaforths tried another rush, with the same result. Colonel Hughes-Hallett then considered it best to remain where he was till orders came.

21. Meanwhile the 9th Lancers, the 12th Lancers, the 'G' battery, Royal Horse Artillery, and Mounted Infantry were working on the right flank.

22. At 12 midnight on the 10th, the 12th Lancers and Guards marched from camp, the former to join the Cavalry Brigade, the latter to protect the rear and right of the Highland Brigade. Considering the night, it does Major-General Sir Henry Colville immense credit that he carried out his orders to the letter, as did Major-General Babington.

23. A heavy fire was maintained the whole morning. The Guards Brigade held a front of about $1\frac{3}{4}$ mile. The Yorkshire Light Infantry protected my right flank with five companies, three companies being left at a drift.

24. Captain Jones, Royal Engineers, and Lieutenant Grubb were with the balloon section, and gave me valuable information during the day. I learnt from this source, at about 12 noon, that the enemy were receiving large reinforcements from Abutsdam and from Spytfontein.

25. The enemy held their own on this part of the field, for the underfeature was strongly entrenched, concealed by small bushes, and on slight undulations.

26. At 12 noon, I ordered the battalion of 'Gordons,' which was with the supply column, to support the Highland Brigade. The trenches, even after the bombardment by lyddite and shrapnel since daybreak, were too strongly held to be cleared.

27. The 'Gordons' advanced in separate half-battalions, and though the attack could not be carried home, the battalion did splendid work throughout the day.

28. At 1 P.M. the Seaforth Highlanders found themselves exposed to a heavy crossfire, the enemy trying to get round to the right. The commanding officer brought his left forward. An order to 'Retire' was given, and it was at this time that the greater part of the casualties occurred. The retirement continued for 500 yards, and the 'Highlanders' remained there till dusk. Lieutenant-Colonel Downman, commanding Gordons, gave the order to retire, because he found his position untenable, so soon as the Seaforth Highlanders made the turning movement to the right.

29. This was an unfortunate retirement, for Lieutenant-Colonel Hughes-Hallett had received instructions from me to remain in position until dusk, and the enemy were at this time quitting the trenches by tens and twentys.

30. I have made use of Lieutenant-Colonel Hughes-Hallett's

report (the acting Brigadier) for the description of the part the Highland Brigade took in this action.

31. Major-General Wauchope told me, when I asked him the question, on the evening of the 10th, that he quite understood his orders, and made no further remark. He died at the head of the Brigade, in which his name will always remain honoured and respected. His high military reputation and attainments disarm all criticism. Every soldier in my Division deplores the loss of a fine soldier and a true comrade.

32. The attack failed; the inclement weather was against success; the men in the Highland Brigade were ready enough to rally, but the paucity of officers and non-commissioned officers rendered this no easy matter. I attach no blame to this splendid brigade. From noon until dark I held my own opposite to the enemy's entrenchments.

33. 'G' Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, fired hard till dark, expending nearly 200 rounds per gun.

34. Nothing could exceed the conduct of the troops from the time of the failure of the attack at daybreak. There was not the slightest confusion, though the fight was carried on under as hard conditions as one can imagine, for the men had been on the move from midnight, and were suffering terribly from thirst. At 7.15 p.m. fighting ceased, the Highland Brigade formed up under cover, the Guards Brigade held my front, the Yorkshire Light Infantry secured my right flank, the Cavalry and guns were drawn in to behind the Infantry.

35. The men carried half ration, they had half ration given them from the Supply Column, and they had a lot of rum served out, as well as a good supply of water.

36. I decided that if I found the trenches vacated in the morning I would advance to Brown's Drift, occupying Magersfontein kopje; if, on the contrary, the entrenchments were still occupied, I would retire slowly to this place. The wounded I sent during the night to the rear, and also the Supply Column.

37. In the morning I found the trenches still occupied, and, although Major-General Sir H. Colville expressed his opinion that it would be advisable to hold on, I found, after going over the position with the senior Officers of my force, there was a concurrence of opinion that my judgment was sound and a retirement advisable.

38. I retired in excellent order at 12 noon, Sir H. Colville, with the Guards, Cavalry, and Artillery, covering the retirement. About 300 of the 'Gordons' volunteered to act as stretcher-bearers to carry back the wounded to camp. There were only two casualties during the retirement.

39. I have to express my appreciation of the clear orders given out, and the careful arrangements made by Colonel Douglas, A.D.C., my Chief Staff Officer, for the attack.

Major-General Sir Henry Colville showed coolness and judgment throughout two trying days.

The same remark applies to Major-General Babington.

I again recognise the business-like manner in which Lieutenant-Colonel Hall, Commanding Royal Artillery, carries out his duties in the field.

Major Bannatine Allason performed splendid work, and assisted greatly in checking the enemy on the right of our attack.

Lieutenant Cuthbert, Scots Guards, my extra Aide-de-Camp, showed considerable coolness in taking a message from me to the Gordon Highlanders. A volley was fired at him, killing his horse; he took off wallets and saddle and returned, letting me learn from others how he had behaved.

Major Milton, Commanding Mounted Infantry, behaved gallantly, and was shot three times before he died: he was making a successful effort to rally some men of the Highland Brigade.

Lieutenant-Colonel the Earl of Airlie did excellent work with two dismounted squadrons, when good service was much needed.

Major Little, in the firing line, did good work all day.

Lieutenant Allhusen, 9th Lancers, and Lieutenant Macnaghten, 12th Lancers, did good work with their Maxims.

Major Maberly, Royal Horse Artillery, acting galloper to Major-General Babington, after rallying thirty or forty men of different regiments, was severely wounded.

Major O'Donnell, Royal Army Medical Corps, and Lieutenant Delap, Royal Army Medical Corps, were indefatigable in attending wounded under fire. Lieutenant-Colonel Codrington, Officer Commanding Coldstream Guards, though wounded, insisted on remaining in command of his battalion till nightfall.

Major the Honourable W. Lambton, Coldstream Guards,

refused to be carried because the bearers were exposed to fire. He remained on the ground thirty-seven hours without food or water.

Captain the Master of Ruthven, Scots Guards, performed, as on several other occasions, valuable services.

Major the Marquis of Winchester was killed whilst displaying almost reckless courage.

Sergeant Wilkinson, 2nd Battalion Coldstream Guards, showed great courage in collecting ammunition. Corporal Bartlet, 2nd Battalion Coldstream Guards, under a very heavy fire, went 1000 yards to get a stretcher for Major Milton.

Corporal Webb, 2nd Battalion Coldstream Guards, showed great courage in taking messages.

Corporal Munro, of the Black Watch, and Lieutenant Hore-Ruthven, of the Black Watch, carried the Marquis of Winchester out of action after he was hit.

The Brigade Major, Captain Ruggles-Brise, and the Aide-de-Camp of Sir H. Colville's Staff, again earn honourable mention, not only in delivering orders, but also for their clear and accurate description of the position.

Captain A. Campbell, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, displayed great coolness throughout the day, and helped to dress the wounds of Captain Gordon under a hot fire.

Lance-Corporal Ray, No. 6766, and Private Phipps, No. 3724, specially mentioned by Major-General Babington as having helped him to rally men and taking them into the firing line.

Highland Light Infantry.

Major Garland performed good service throughout the day.

Major the Honourable H. Anson performed good service throughout the day.

Captain Richardson and Captain Wolfe Murray were wounded, but remained in the front with their companies.

Captain and Adjutant Cowan, D.S.O., gallantly led and rallied his men, and was killed at close quarters.

Sergeant-Major Stevens rallied men.

No. 4050 Sergeant M'Donald, gallant behaviour, specially brought to notice for carrying messages to guns, and to Medical Officer under heavy fire.

No. 4896, Lance-Corporal Fraser, No. 4653, Sergeant Piper

Ross, and No. 4741, Piper M'Lellan specially brought to notice for their cheery conduct under fire and helping to rally men.

No. 3113, Corporal Shaul brought to notice for several specific cases of bravery when in charge of the stretcher-bearers of the battalion.

No. 3269, Private Peat, No. 3426, Private Richmond, and No. 1674, Private Stewart, excellent service and setting a good example to their comrades.

Gordon Highlanders.

Captain E. B. Towse recommended for special reward by his Commanding Officer for his gallantry and devotion in assisting the late Colonel Downman when mortally wounded in the retirement, and when close up to the front of the firing line. He endeavoured to carry Colonel Downman on his back, but finding this not possible, supported him till joined by Colour-Sergeant Nelson and Lance-Corporal Hodgson. The conduct of these non-commissioned officers is described as admirable.

Seaforth Highlanders.

Captain the Honourable Forbes Sempill, conspicuous and gallant manner in which he rallied and led his men straight up to the front.

Lieutenant Grant did good service taking messages to the front from Colonel Hughes-Hallett under a heavy fire.

Lieutenant Lindsay, very gallant and conspicuous behaviour when in charge of the Maxim gun.

Band Sergeant Hoare, conspicuous for his coolness and gallantry during the day in helping Dr. Ensor to succour wounded. Personally carried Captain Fetherstonhaugh (wounded) on his back some 800 yards to the dressing station.

Black Watch.

Lieutenant Douglas, Royal Army Medical Corps, showed great gallantry and devotion, under a very severe fire, in advancing in the open and attending to Captain Gordon (Gordon Highlanders), who was wounded; also attending to Major Robinson and other wounded men under a fearful fire.

Corporal Gayner, Black Watch, rallying men, and by his example encouraging his comrades.

Private A. Bettington, Cape Mounted Rifles, attached to Cape Medical Corps, and Private Johnson, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, were instrumental in removing a wounded Highlander from the front under a heavy fire.

The complete list of the men and Officers considered worthy of special mention in the Black Watch I have not yet been able to obtain. I would add that I left Major-General Pole-Carew, C.B., at Modder River Camp with the 9th Brigade, minus the battalion of Yorkshire Light Infantry; he has also Rimington's Guides and the Naval 4·7-inch. He carried out his orders quite correctly, making a diversion against Magersfontein Ridge along the railway.—I am, Sir, Your obedient Servant, METHUEN, Lieutenant-General, Commanding 1st Division.

The following is an extract from a letter by a Sergeant in the Gordon Highlanders, dated Bloemfontein, April 13th:—

'I have just been reading Lord Methuen's despatches, and there is one thing in them that makes me feel mad. He mentions that at Magersfontein, about 1.30 P.M., Colonel Downman gave the order to retire. I say he did not. I should know, as I was the only one that came back of the party who was with him. I was his signaller that day. About 1.30 P.M., the position was like this:—A firing line, of whom fifty per cent. were killed or wounded; in front of the firing line, twenty yards, Colonel Downman, the Adjutant, Captain Gordon (dangerously wounded), five men, and myself; forty yards behind the firing line, 'K' Company, Gordons. Now, about this time, while lying under a heavy frontal fire, a cross fire was brought to bear upon us from our right. The word came along—"They are retiring on the right." Colonel Downman rose to his feet to see if it was right, and immediately shouted to Captain Towse to bring forward the left of his company to check the cross fire coming from our right. Owing to such an infernal noise of guns and rifle fire, the order could not be heard. He calmly walked back thirty yards, amid a cloud of dust thrown up by bullets. He stopped, put his hand to his mouth to shout the order, when down he went. Even then he raised himself with his right hand off the ground, and waved to 'K' Company to swing round to its left. It was his last effort; he never spoke or moved again. From that moment the retirement

of the Gordons began, taking as many wounded as we could.

Lord Methuen says in his despatch he gathered from Colonel Hughes Hallett the facts about Colonel Downman giving the order to retire. I know Colonel Hallett well, and I positively assert that Colonel Hallett was not near Colonel Downman at the time mentioned. So which do you believe—Colonel Hallett, who was not near us, or his (Colonel Downman's) signaller, who was by his side the whole day? The whole of my regiment feel very bitter about this, so I am telling you the honest truth about the affair, and, to give honour to whom honour is due, a braver man never commanded a regiment.'

APPENDIX D,

DESPATCHES FROM LORD ROBERTS AND SIR WILLIAM GATACRE *

STORMBERG.

War Office, March 16, 1900.

The following Despatch, with enclosure, has been received from Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, V.C., G.C.B., etc., Commander-in-Chief, South Africa:—

FROM FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ROBERTS TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR

Army Head-Quarters, South Africa, Cape Town, February 1900.

My Lord,

1. I have the honour to submit for your Lordship's information a duplicate Despatch, dated January 19, 1900, from Lieutenant-General Sir W. F. Gatacre, K.C.B., D.S.O., describing the action of Stormberg on December 10, 1899. General Sir Redvers Buller was in chief command in South Africa on the date of the action, and up to January 10, 1900, but the original Despatch, which was forwarded some time ago to the Chief of the Staff in Natal, has not reached him.

* From *The Times*, Saturday, March 17th, 1900.

2. I am of opinion that the failure of Lieutenant-General Gatacre's attempt to seize the Stormberg railway junction was mainly due to reliance on inaccurate information regarding the ground to be traversed, and the position held by the Boers, to the employment of too small a force, and to the men being tired out by a journey by train, followed by a long night march before they came into contact with the enemy.

3. When it became evident shortly after midnight that the guides were leading the column in a wrong direction, I consider that Lieutenant-General Gatacre should have halted and endeavoured to find the proper road, or should have fallen back on Molteno, rather than have risked the safety of the entire force by following a route which brought the troops into difficult ground commanded on both sides by the enemy.

4. The failure of the mounted detachment from Penhoek, with four 2·5 inch guns and one Maxim, to join the column doubtless contributed to the reverse which Lieutenant-General Gatacre experienced. This failure is ascribed in the report to the remissness of a telegraph clerk; but if, when the order was handed in for despatch, the precaution had been taken to request a telegraphic acknowledgment of its receipt, the General Officer Commanding would have known whether his instructions had been duly received by the Officer Commanding at Penhoek.

5. It is stated that, when directed to retire, a large portion of the 2nd Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers and of the 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Rifles remained behind, and were eventually made prisoners. No explanation of this incident is furnished by Lieutenant-General Gatacre, but, presumably, it must be ascribed to the men being exhausted by their long march, and, consequently, unable to fall back with sufficient rapidity under a hostile fire.

6. The conduct of the officers, non-commissioned officers and men, brought to notice by the General Officer Commanding, seems deserving of acknowledgment, especially that of Band-Sergeant J. Stone, 2nd Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers, whose services are detailed in the accompanying memorandum, dated 26th January 1900.—I have, etc.,

ROBERTS, Field Marshal,
Commanding-in-Chief, South Africa.

P.S.—Since writing the above I have heard by telegraph

from Sir Redvers Buller that the original despatch has at last reached him. To avoid delay, I forward the duplicate:

Sterkstroom, January 19, 1900.

SIR,—In continuation of my telegram, 1578c, I have the honour to submit a duplicate despatch on the action of Stormberg on the 10th December 1899.

The original despatch was posted to the Chief of Staff, Natal, with appendices in original. No copy was retained, but the accompanying report is, in substance, identical with that sent to General Buller.—I have, etc.,

W. GATACRE, Lieutenant-General,
Commanding 3rd Division.

The Chief of the Staff,
Cape Town.

DESPATCH

The Engagement at Stormberg on 10th December 1899.

On the 9th December 1899 the following moved from Putter's Kraal to Molteno:—

By Train.—Divisional Staff; Royal Artillery Staff, with 74th and 77th Batteries, Royal Field Artillery; Staff, Royal Engineers, and 12th Company, Royal Engineers; 2nd Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers; headquarters and four companies, 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Rifles; three companies, 1st Battalion Royal Scots (of which one company was left at Bushman's Hoek, and two companies remained at Molteno); Royal Army Medical Corps, field hospital, and bearer company. At Bushman's Hoek the remaining four companies of the Royal Irish Rifles were picked up.

By Road.—Two companies Mounted Infantry and 42 Cape Mounted Police, also from Bushman's Hoek one company Royal Berkshire Mounted Infantry.

One hundred and sixty Brabant's Horse, and 235 Cape Mounted Rifles with four 2·5 inch guns and one Maxim should have marched from Penhoek, but did not arrive at Molteno owing to the failure of the telegraph clerk to transmit the message handed to him at midnight on the 8th.

On detraining at Molteno the following force marched on Stormberg at about 9 P.M.:—

Staff.—Lieutenant-General Gatacre; Captain Hare, Aide-de-Camp; Captain Little, Aide-de-Camp; Lieutenant M'Neill,

Aide-de-Camp; Colonel Allen, Assistant Adjutant-General; Major Sladen, Assistant Provost-Marshal; Captain Cox, Signalling Officer; Lieutenant-Colonel Edge, Principal Medical Officer; Major Twiss, Royal Army Medical Corps. Infantry in front, Royal Irish Rifles leading, followed by 74th Field Battery, Cape Mounted Police, Dewar's Mounted Infantry, 77th Field Battery, Royal Berkshire Mounted Infantry; vehicles and field hospital, escorted by 12th Company Royal Engineers. Guides were provided by the Cape Mounted Police.

The force marched, with the usual halts, for about 8 miles by moonlight, and halted near Roberts' farm at about 12.30 A.M. on the morning of 10th December.

The chief guide now reported that we were within 1½ miles of the enemy's position, and after a rest of about three-quarters of an hour we marched off again in the dark.

It was soon found that the guide had gone wrong, and instead of a march of 1½ miles to the position, the force marched till 3.45 A.M., and found itself, after a long detour, not at the point which I wished to reach.

The place to which the column was led was a strong position occupied by the enemy, who opened fire on the head of the column. Three companies of the Royal Irish Rifles formed to the left and occupied a kopje; the remainder of this battalion and the Northumberland Fusiliers advanced up a steep hill against the enemy's position.

The Artillery was ordered forward to the kopje occupied by the three companies, Royal Irish Rifles, and in crossing a nullah one of the guns unfortunately stuck, and was temporarily abandoned. The team was subsequently shot down, and it was impossible to get the gun away. The two batteries took up positions, one on, and the other immediately west of the kopje.

The Mounted Infantry endeavoured to turn the Boer right, but fell back on the kopje occupied by the three companies, Royal Irish Rifles. After about half-an-hour the Officer Commanding 2nd Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers, finding his position untenable, gave the order to retire across the open to a ridge beyond, but a large proportion of his men, and also of the Royal Irish Rifles, remained behind, and were eventually taken prisoners. The Officer Commanding Royal Irish Rifles and his second in command were severely wounded early in action.

The Artillery, who experienced great difficulty in coming into action owing to the difficulties of the ground, covered his retirement. The two batteries again retired to the south-east, to a position on the neck of a ridge, where they remained in action for a considerable time (over an hour), and covered the retirement of the Royal Irish Rifles and the Mounted Infantry. The enemy now brought a big gun into action, which made excellent practice, and was never silenced. Fortunately, the large majority of the shells only burst on impact or not at all. At about 6 A.M, mounted bodies of the enemy were observed trying to get round both our flanks, and the batteries, facing east and west, drove them back with a few well-placed shells.

A retirement on Molteno was now commenced; the Royal Artillery, Mounted Infantry, and Cape Mounted Police covering the Infantry. During the retirement across a ravine a gun got stuck in a quicksand, and had to be abandoned. The retirement continued to Molteno, a distance of some 9 or 10 miles along the direct road, the Artillery and Mounted Infantry keeping the enemy at a distance.

At one portion of the line of retirement the enemy had evidently trained a position gun, which made good practice at 6000 yards range.

Molteno was reached about 11 A.M.

At 5 P.M. Infantry entrained; the two companies 1st Battalion Royal Scots, and Royal Engineers for Bushman's Hoek; the Northumberland Fusiliers, and Royal Irish Rifles for Sterkstroom; the Divisional Staff, Royal Artillery, and Mounted Infantry for Cyphergat. Brabant's Horse (160) arrived in afternoon, and scouted towards Stormberg; they saw a party of about 50 Boers patrolling, and counted about 1100 mounted men on the position.

They bivouacked at Molteno, falling back the next morning on Cyphergat.

With regard to the foregoing, I have the honour to report that, from information received from the most reliable sources at my disposal, it appeared there were about 1700 Boers only at Stormberg, that there were two or three guns there, and that, if the position was approached from the west, Artillery could be brought into action on the kopjes which lie to the west of the Stormberg basin, and from which the whole of the Boer positions could be commanded. It appeared to me that the moment afforded an excellent opportunity for seizing the junction with all its attendant advan-

tages, so I decided to move from Putter's Kraal with as many troops as I could spare and attempt a surprise. To give such a movement any chance of success, it had to be carried through in one night, as a halt at Molteno would have given the enemy information of our intended attack.

I thought the plan out and discussed it with Commanding Officers, and after considering the details of ground with the police, who belong to Molteno and its neighbourhood, and who are supposed to know every yard of the ground, I decided to carry out the project.

I was aware that the column, when it moved off from Roberts' farm about 12.30 A.M. 10th December, was moving too much to the west, and I questioned the guide and Sergeant Morgan, Cape Mounted Police, who were leading us, but both declared they knew the way perfectly, and that they were taking us by a road which, although slightly longer, would enable us to avoid wire and a bad piece of track, which the guns would find a difficulty in getting over at night. This difficult piece of road had not been mentioned by them before, the whole way had been reported fit and easy for wheeled transport. The police guides said that the road, though longer than the originally named road, was not much longer, and that it would bring us out at the spot I wished to arrive at.

The column therefore proceeded, but half-an-hour after moving off, the Officer Commanding 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Rifles (whose regiment was leading) reported to me that he thought the guide had lost his way. I immediately questioned Sergeant Morgan again, but he assured me that the guides (two Europeans and two natives—police) knew the road accurately, and that he also was positive about it. I made Sergeant Morgan himself go to the head of the column and lead it.

I moved myself with the leading battalion, and constantly questioned the guide, but was as constantly assured by Sergeant Morgan that we were moving on the right road, though it was further than he had estimated.

Just before dawn he pointed out to me the kopje which he said was our objective, but it was then, I should say, about two miles off. I considered that as he reported the remainder of the road to be very good going, it was better, notwithstanding the fatigue of the men, to push on and seize the position. It became a question of doing this or of retracing

our steps to Molteno. The dawn was just breaking when the column was suddenly fired into, before the Mounted Infantry, who were kept behind the Infantry during the night march, had pushed out to cover the front.

Owing to the precipitous nature of the ground, the Artillery was unable for some time to find a suitable position, but one battery managed to come into action on the south end, while the second battery opened fire from the west of this kopje.

The retirement of the guns was steadily and carefully carried out by alternate batteries, covered by the Mounted Infantry, and Lieutenant-Colonel Jeffreys showed great judgment in the selection of positions.

It was not reported to me that the men of the Infantry regiments (who were subsequently taken prisoners) had not rejoined their regiments when I gave the order to fall back, and I was under the impression that they had reached the ridge, as I was with the Mounted Infantry the whole time, and had seen numbers of men of both regiments crossing the plain, falling back to where the regiments were assembling. It appears many of these men remained in the nullah under shelter of the banks instead of retiring to the second ridge to their regiments. When I saw no more men coming back I gave the order to the remaining battery of Artillery to move back, covered by the Mounted Infantry.

The retirement, though under Artillery fire, was steadily conducted.

I much regret the serious loss in officers and men entailed by the non-success of the operation.

An eye sketch of the country, and a nominal roll of Officers wounded and missing are attached. I bring the names of—

Second-Lieutenant Duncombe-Shafto; No. N.F. 2270, Band-Sergeant J. Stone; No. N.F. 1989, Colour-Sergeant A. Landen; No. N.F. 3923, Private G. Benson, 2nd Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers, to the notice of the Commander-in-Chief.

Major E. M. Perceval, 77th Battery, Royal Field Artillery, though severely wounded, continued to command his battery till the end of the day, and I would wish to bring his name prominently to notice in this connection.

W. GATACRE, Lieutenant-General,
Commanding 3rd Division.

19th January 1900.

APPENDIX E

THE TUGELA AND SPION KOP

DESPATCHES FROM LORD ROBERTS AND SIR R. BULLER[1]

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR.

Army Headquarters, South Africa,
Camp, Dekiel Drift, Riet River, 13th February 1900.

My Lord,—I have the honour to submit, for your Lordship's information, despatches from General Sir Redvers Buller, describing the advance across the Tugela River on the 17th and 18th January 1900, and the capture and evacuation of the Spion Kop position on the 23rd and 24th January, as well as certain minor operations between the 19th and 24th January, on the right or eastern line of advance.

2. The plan of operations is not very clearly described in the despatches themselves, but it may be gathered from them and the accompanying documents themselves that the original intention was to cross the Tugela at or near Trichardt's Drift, and thence by following the road past 'Fair View' and 'Acton Homes,' to gain the open plain north of Spion Kop, the Boer position in front of Potgieter's Drift being too strong to be taken by direct attack. The whole force, less one brigade, was placed under the orders of Sir Charles Warren, who, the day after he had crossed the Tugela, seems to have consulted his General, and principal Staff Officers, and to have come to the conclusion that the flanking movement which Sir Redvers Buller had mentioned in his secret instructions was impracticable on account of the insufficiency of supplies. He accordingly decided to advance by the more direct road leading north-east and branching off from a point east of 'Three Tree Hill.' The selection of this road necessitated the capture and retention of Spion Kop, but whether it would have been equally necessary to occupy Spion Kop, had the line of advance indicated by Sir Redvers Buller been followed, is not stated in the correspondence. As Sir Charles Warren considered it impossible to make the wide flanking movement

[1] From *The Times*, Wednesday, April 18, 1900.

which was recommended, if not actually prescribed, in his secret instructions, he should at once have acquainted Sir Redvers Buller with the course of action which he proposed to adopt. There is nothing to show whether he did so or not, but it seems only fair to Sir Charles Warren to point out that Sir Redvers Buller appears throughout to have been aware of what was happening. On several occasions he was present during the operations. He repeatedly gave advice to his subordinate Commander, and on the day after the withdrawal from Spion Kop he resumed the chief command.

3. As regards the withdrawal of the troops from the Spion Kop position, which, though occupied almost without opposition in the early morning of the 24th January, had to be held throughout the day under an extremely heavy fire, and the retention of which had become essential to the relief of Ladysmith, I regret that I am unable to concur with Sir Redvers Buller in thinking that Lieut.-Colonel Thorneycroft exercised a wise discretion in ordering the troops to retire. Even admitting that due preparations may not have been made for strengthening the position during the night, reorganising the defence, and bringing up artillery—in regard to which Sir Charles Warren's report does not altogether bear out Sir Redvers Buller's contention—admitting also that the senior officers on the summit of the hill might have been more promptly informed of the measures taken by Sir Charles Warren to support and reinforce them, I am of opinion that Lieut.-Colonel Thorneycroft's assumption of responsibility and authority was wholly inexcusable. During the night the enemy's fire, if it did not cease altogether, could not have been formidable, and, though lamp-signalling was not possible at the time, owing to the supply of oil having failed, it would not have taken more than two or three hours at most for Lieut.-Colonel Thorneycroft to communicate by messenger with Major-General Coke, or Sir Charles Warren, and to receive a reply. Major-General Coke appears to have left Spion Kop at 9.30 P.M., for the purpose of consulting with Sir Charles Warren, and up to that hour the idea of a withdrawal had not been entertained. Yet almost immediately after Major-General Coke's departure Lieut.-Colonel Thorneycroft issued an order, without reference to superior authority, which upset the whole plan of operations, and rendered unavailing the sacrifices which had already been made to carry it into effect.

On the other hand, it is only right to state that Lieut.-Colonel Thorneycroft appears to have behaved in a very gallant manner throughout the day, and it was doubtless due, in a great measure, to his exertions and example that the troops continued to hold the summit of the hill until directed to retire.

4. The conduct of Captain Phillips, Brigade-Major of the 10th Brigade, on the occasion in question, is deserving of high commendation. He did his best to rectify the mistake which was being made, but it was too late. Signalling communication was not re-established until 2.30 A.M., on the 25th January, and by that time the naval guns could not have reached the summit of the hill before daybreak. Major-General Coke did not return, and Lieut.-Colonel Thorneycroft had gone away. Moreover, most of the troops had begun to leave the hill, and the working parties, with the half company of Royal Engineers, had also withdrawn.

5. It is to be regretted that Sir Charles Warren did not himself visit Spion Kop during the afternoon or evening, knowing, as he did, that the state of affairs there was very critical, and that the loss of the position would involve the failure of the operations. He was, consequently, obliged to summon Major-General Coke to his head-quarters in the evening in order that he might ascertain how matters were going on, and the command on Spion Kop thus devolved on Lieut.-Colonel Thorneycroft; but Major-General Coke was not aware of this. About mid-day, under instructions from Sir Redvers Buller, Sir Charles Warren had directed Lieut.-Colonel Thorneycroft to assume command on the summit of the hill, with the temporary rank of Brigadier-General, but this order was not communicated to Major-General Coke, who, until he left the position at 9.30 P.M., was under the impression that the command had devolved on Colonel Hill, as senior officer, after Colonel Crofton had been wounded. Omissions or mistakes of this nature may be trivial in themselves, yet may exercise an important influence on the course of events; and I think that Sir Redvers Buller is justified in remarking that 'there was a want of organisation and system which acted most unfavourably on the defence.'

The attempt to relieve Ladysmith, described in these despatches, was well devised, and I agree with Sir Redvers Buller in thinking that it ought to have succeeded. That it failed may, in some measure, be due to the difficulties of the

ground, and the commanding positions held by the enemy—probably also to errors of judgment and want of administrative capacity on the part of Sir Charles Warren. But whatever faults Sir Charles Warren may have committed, the failure must also be ascribed to the disinclination of the Officer in supreme command to assert his authority and see that what he thought best was done, and also to the unwarrantable and needless assumption of responsibility by a subordinate Officer.

7. The gratifying feature in these despatches is the admirable behaviour of the troops throughout the operations,—

I have, etc. ROBERTS, Field-Marshal,
Commander-in-Chief, South Africa.

FROM GENERAL SIR REDVERS BULLER TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR

(Through Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, G.C.B., Commander-in-Chief, Cape Town.)

Spearman's Hill, 30th January 1900.

SIR,—I have the honour to report that General Sir Charles Warren's Division having arrived at Estcourt, less two battalions, 10th Brigade, which were left at the Cape, by the 7th January, it moved to Frere on the 9th.

The column moved as ordered, but torrents of rain fell on the 9th, which filled all the spruits, and, indeed, rendered many of them impassable for many hours. To forward supply alone took 650 ox-wagons, and as in the 16 miles from Frere to Springfield there were three places at which all the wagons had to be double spanned, and some required three spans, some idea may be formed of the difficulties, but these were all successfully overcome by the willing labours of the troops.

The 4th Brigade reached Springfield on the 12th in support of the mounted troops, who had surprised and seized the important position of Spearman's Hill, commanding Potgieter's Drift, on the 11th.

By the 13th all troops were at Springfield and Spearman's Hill, and supply was well forward.

On the 16th a reserve of 17 days' supply having been collected, General Sir C. Warren, in command of the 2nd Division, the 11th Brigade of the 5th Division, the Brigade Division Royal Field Artillery, 5th Division, and certain corps troops, in-

cluding the Mounted Brigade, moved from Springfield to Trichardt's Drift, which is about six miles west of Potgieter's.

I attach Sir C. Warren's report of his operations.

On the night of the 23rd, General Warren attacked Spion Kop, which operation he has made the subject of a special report. On the morning of the 25th, finding that Spion Kop had been abandoned in the night, I decided to withdraw General Warren's force; the troops had been continuously engaged for a week, in circumstances entailing considerable hardships, there had been very heavy losses on Spion Kop. I consequently assumed the command, commenced the withdrawal of the ox and heavy mule transports on the 25th; this was completed by midday the 26th; by double spanning, the loaded ox-wagons got over the drift at the rate of about eight per hour. The mule-wagons went over the pontoon bridge, but all the mules had to be taken out and the vehicles passed over by hand. For about seven hours of the night the drift could not be used, as it was dangerous in the dark, but the use of the pontoon went on day and night. In addition to machine guns, six batteries of Royal Field Artillery, and four howitzers, the following vehicles were passed:—ox-wagons, 232; 10-span mule-wagons, 98; 6-span, 107; 4-span, 52; total, 489 vehicles. In addition to these, the ambulances were working backwards and forwards evacuating the sick and wounded.

By 2 P.M. the 26th, all the ox-wagons were over, and by 11.30 P.M. all the mule transports were across and the bridge clear for the troops. By 4 A.M. the 27th, all the troops were over, and by 8 A.M. the pontoons were gone and all was clear. The troops had all reached their new camps by 10 A.M. The marches averaged for the mounted troops, about 7 miles, and for the Infantry and Artillery an average of 5 miles.

Everything worked without a hitch, and the arrangements reflected great credit on the Staff of all degrees; but I must especially mention Major Irwin, R.E., and his men of the Pontoon Troop, who were untiring. When all men were over, the chesses of the pontoon bridge were so worn by the traffic that I do not think they could have lasted another half hour.

Thus ended an expedition which I think ought to have succeeded. We have suffered very heavy losses, and lost many whom we can ill spare; but, on the other hand, we have inflicted as great or greater losses upon the enemy than they have upon us, and they are, by all accounts, thoroughly

disheartened; while our troops are, I am glad and proud to say, in excellent fettle.—I have, etc.,

REDVERS BULLER,
General Officer Commanding.

FROM LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR C. WARREN TO THE CHIEF OF THE STAFF.

Hatting's Farm, 29th January 1900.

SIR,—I have the honour to make the following report on the operations on the north side of Tugela, west of Spion Kop, from the 17th to the 27th of January 1900:—

1. On the 8th of January field orders were published constituting the 10th Brigade of the 5th Division a Corps Brigade, and placing the 4th Brigade in the 5th Division. The 5th Division thus constituted marched from Frere on the 10th instant, arriving at Springfield on the 12th instant.

2. On the 15th January I received your secret instructions to command a force to proceed across the Tugela, near Trichardt's Drift to the west of Spion Kop, recommending me to proceed forward, refusing my right (namely Spion Kop) and bringing my left forward to gain the open plain north of Spion Kop. This move was to commence as soon as supplies were all in, and the 10th Brigade (except two companies) removed from Springfield Bridge to Spearman's Hill.

3. I was provided with 4 days' rations with which I was to cross the Tugela, fight my way round to the north of Spion Kop, and join your column opposite Potgieter's.

4. On the 15th January I made the arrangements for getting supplies, and moved the 10th Brigade on the following day; and on the evening of the 16th January I left Springfield with a force under my command, which amounted to an Army Corps (less one brigade) and by a night march arrived at Trichardt's Drift, and took possession of the hills on the south side of the Tugela.

5. On the 17th January I threw pontoon bridges across the Tugela, passed the Infantry across by ponts, and captured the hills immediately commanding the drift on the north side with two brigades commanded by Generals Woodgate and Hart. The Commander-in-Chief was present during part of the day, and gave some verbal directions to General Woodgate.

The Mounted Brigade passed over principally by the drift, and went over the country as far as Acton Homes, and on the following day (18th) had a successful action with a small party of Boers, bringing in 31 prisoners.

During the night of the 17th, and day of the 18th, the whole of the wagons belonging to the force were brought across the Tugela, and the artillery were in position outside of Wright's Farm.

6. On the 19th two brigades advanced, occupying the slopes of the adjoining hills on the right, and the wagons were successfully brought to Venter's Spruit.

In the evening, after having examined the possible roads by which we could proceed, I assembled the General Officers and the Staff, and the Officer Commanding Royal Artillery, and Commanding Royal Engineer, and pointed out to them that of the two roads by which we could advance the eastern one by Acton Homes must be rejected, because time would not allow of it, and with this all concurred. I then pointed out that the only possible way of all getting through by the road north of Fair View would be by taking three or four days' food in our haversacks, and sending all our wagons back across the Tugela; but before we could do this we must capture the position in front of us.

7. On the following day, 20th January, I placed two brigades and six batteries of Artillery at the disposal of General Sir C. F. Clery, with instructions to attack the Boer positions by a series of outflanking movements, and by the end of the day, after fighting for 12 hours, we were in possession of the whole part of the hills, but found a strongly entrenched line on the comparatively flat country beyond us.

8. On the 21st the Boers displayed considerable activity on our left, and the Commander-in-Chief desired me to move two batteries from right to left. At a subsequent date, during the day, I found it impossible to proceed without howitzers, and telegraphed for four from Potgieter's. These arrived early on the morning of the 22nd, and the Commander-in-Chief, arriving about the same time, directed me to place two of these howitzers on the left, two having already been placed on the right flank. I pointed out to the Commander-in-Chief that it would be impossible to get wagons through by the road leading past Fair View, unless we first took Spion Kop, which lies within about 2000 yards of the road. The Commander-in-Chief agreed that Spion Kop would have

to be taken. Accordingly, that evening orders were drawn up giving the necessary instructions to General Talbot Coke to take Spion Kop that night, but, owing to an absence of sufficient reconnaissance, he requested that the attack might be put off for a day.

9. On the 23rd January the Commander-in-Chief came into camp, the attack on Spion Kop was decided upon, and Lieutenant-Colonel à Court, of the Headquarter Staff, was directed by the Commander-in-Chief to accompany General Woodgate, who was detailed to command the attacking column. The account of the capture of Spion Kop is given in another report.

10. On the morning of the 25th January the Commander-in-Chief arrived, decided to retire the force, and assumed direct command. The whole of the wagons of the 5th Division were got down to the drift during the day, and were crossed over before 2 P.M. on the 26th January.

11. The arrangements for the retirement of the 5th Division were exceedingly well got out, and the retirement was made in good order during the night of the 26th, the whole of the troops crossing to the south side of the Tugela before daylight, and the wagons were packed, and the troops bivouacked near the spruit about 2 miles to the east of the pontoon bridges. About 10 P.M., previous to the retirement, heavy musketry was heard to the north of our position, which has been attributed to a Boer commando thinking we were going to make a night attack.

12. I propose to forward as soon as possible a more detailed report of the movements of brigades and units, and acts of individuals.

C. WARREN, Lieutenant-General,
Commanding 5th Division.

FROM THE GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING, NATAL, TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR.

(By the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, Cape Town.)

Spearman's Hill, 30th January 1900.

SIR,—In forwarding Lieutenant-General Sir C. Warren's report on the capture and evacuation of Spion Kop, I have the honour to offer the following observations.

Sir C. Warren is hardly correct in saying that he was only allowed 3½ days' provisions. I had told him that transport

for 3½ days would be sufficient burden to him, but that I would keep him filled up as he wanted it. That he was aware of this is shown by the following telegram which he sent on the day in question. It is the only report I had from Sir C. Warren:—

(Sent 7.45 P.M. Received 8.15 P.M.)

'*Left Flank, 19th January.*

'TO THE CHIEF OF THE STAFF.

'I find there are only two roads by which we could possibly get from Trichardt's Drift to Potgeiter's, on the north of the Tugela, one by Acton Homes, the other by Fair View and Rosalie; the first I reject as too long, the second is a very difficult road for a large number of wagons, unless the enemy is thoroughly cleared out. I am, therefore, going to adopt some special arrangements which will involve my stay at Venter's Laager for two or three days. I will send in for further supplies and report progress,—WARREN.'

The reply to this was that three days' supply was being sent.

I went over to Sir C. Warren on the 23rd. I pointed out to him that I had no further report and no intimation of the special arrangements foreshadowed by this telegram of the 19th, that for four days he had kept his men continuously exposed to shell and rifle fire, perched on the edge of an almost precipitous hill, that the position admitted of no second line, and the supports were massed close behind the firing line in indefensible formations, and that a panic or sudden charge might send the whole lot in disorder down the hill at any moment. I said it was too dangerous a situation to be prolonged, and that he must either attack or I should withdraw his force. I advocated, as I had previously done, an advance from his left. He said that he had the night before ordered General Coke to assault Spion Kop, but the latter had objected to undertaking a night attack on a position the road to which he had not reconnoitred, and added that he intended to assault Spion Kop that night.

I suggested that as General Coke was still lame from the effects of a lately broken leg, General Woodgate, who had two sound legs, was better adapted for mountain climbing.

As no heliograph could, on account of the fire, be kept on the east side of Spion Kop, messages for Sir C. Warren were

received by our signallers at Spearman and telegraphed to Sir C. Warren; thus I saw them before he did, as I was at the signal station. The telegram Sir C. Warren quotes did not give me confidence in its sender, and at the moment I could see that our men on the top had given way and that efforts were being made to rally them. I telegraphed to Sir C. Warren: 'Unless you put some really good hard fighting man in command on the top you will lose the hill. I suggest Thorneycroft.'

The statement that a staff officer reported direct to me during the day is a mistake. Colonel à Court was sent down by General Woodgate almost as soon as he gained the summit.

I have not thought it necessary to order any investigation. If at sundown the defence of the summit had been taken regularly in hand, entrenchments laid out, gun emplacements prepared, the dead removed, the wounded collected, and, in fact, the whole place brought under regular military command, and careful arrangements made for the supply of water and food to the scattered fighting line, the hills would have been held, I am sure.

But no arrangements were made. General Coke appears to have been ordered away just as he would have been useful, and no one succeeded him; those on the top were ignorant of the fact that guns were coming up, and generally there was a want of organisation and system that acted most unfavourably on the defence.

It is admitted by all that Colonel Thorneycroft acted with the greatest gallantry throughout the day, and really saved the situation. Preparations for the second day's defence should have been organised during the day, and have been commenced at nightfall.

As this was not done, I think Colonel Thorneycroft exercised a wise discretion.

Our losses, I regret to say, were very heavy, but the enemy admitted to our doctors that theirs were equally severe, and though we were not successful in retaining the position, the losses inflicted on the enemy, and the attack generally, have had a marked effect upon them.

I cannot close these remarks without bearing testimony to the gallant and admirable behaviour of the troops, the endurance shown by the Lancashire Fusiliers, the Middlesex Regiment, and Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry was admirable,

while the efforts of the 2nd Battalion Scottish Rifles and 3rd Battalion King's Royal Rifles were equally good, and the Royal Lancasters fought gallantly.

I am writing to catch the mail, and have not any particulars yet to enable me to report more fully on details.—I have, etc.,

REDVERS BULLER.

REPORT BY LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR CHARLES WARREN, K.C.B., UPON THE CAPTURE AND SUBSEQUENT EVACUATION OF SPION KOP.

CHIEF OF THE STAFF,—I make the operations against Spion Kop in a separate report, because they did not enter into my original plans.

Under the original instructions of the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, of 15th January 1900, I was to act as circumstances required, but according to instructions was generally to continue throughout refusing my right and throwing my left forward until I gained the open plain north of Spion Kop.

Upon the 19th of January, on arrival at Venter's Laager, I assembled all the General Officers, Officers Commanding Royal Artillery, and Royal Engineers of Divisions, and Staff Officers, together. I pointed out to them that, with the three-and-a-half ($3\frac{1}{2}$) days' provisions allowed, it was impossible to advance by the left road through Acton Homes. In this they unanimously concurred. I showed them that the only possible road was that going over Fair View through Rosalie, but I expressed my conviction that this could not be done unless we sent the whole of our transport back across the Tugela, and attempted to march through with our rations in our haversacks—without impedimenta.

The hills were cleared on the following day, and very strong entrenchments found behind them. The Commander-in-Chief was present on the 21st and 22nd January, and I pointed out the difficulties of marching along the road, accompanied by wagons, without first taking Spion Kop.

Accordingly, on the night of the 22nd, I ordered General Coke to occupy Spion Kop. He, however, desired that the occupation might be deferred for a day in order that he might make a reconnaisance with the Officers Commanding battalions to be sent there.

On 23rd January, the Commander-in-Chief came into camp, and told me that there were two courses open—(1) to attack, (2) to retire. I replied that I should prefer to attack Spion Kop to retiring, and showed the Commander-in-Chief my orders of the previous day.

The Commander-in-Chief then desired that I should put General Woodgate in command of the expedition, and detailed Lieut.-Colonel à Court to accompany him as Staff Officer.

The same evening General Woodgate proceeded with the Lancashire Fusiliers, the Royal Lancaster Regiment, a portion of Thorneycroft's Horse and half company Royal Engineers, supported by two companies of the Connaught Rangers and by the Imperial Light Infantry, the latter having just arrived by Trichardt's Drift.

The attack and capture of Spion Kop was entirely successful. General Woodgate, having secured the summit on the 24th, reported that he had entrenched a position and hoped he was secure, but that the fog was too thick to permit him to see. The position was rushed without casualties, other than three men wounded.

Lieut.-Colonel à Court came down in the morning and stated that everything was satisfactory and secure, and telegraphed to the Commander-in-Chief to that effect. Scarcely had he started on his return to headquarters when a heliogram arrived from Colonel Crofton (Royal Lancaster). The message was, 'Reinforce at once or all lost. General dead.'

He also sent a similar message to headquarters. I immediately ordered General Coke to proceed to his assistance, and to take command of the troops. He started at once, and was accompanied by the Middlesex and Dorsetshire regiments.

I replied to Colonel Crofton, 'I am sending two battalions, and the Imperial Light Infantry are on their way up. You must hold on to the last. No surrender.'

This occurred about 10 A.M.

Shortly afterwards, I received a telegram from the Commander-in-Chief, ordering me to appoint Lieut.-Colonel Thorneycroft to the command of the summit. I accordingly had heliographed:—'With the approval of the Commander-in-Chief, I place Lieut.-Colonel Thorneycroft in command of the summit, with the local rank of Brigadier-General.'

For some hours after this message I could get no informa-

tion from the summit. It appears that the signallers and their apparatus were destroyed by the heavy fire.

I repeatedly asked for Colonel Thorneycroft to state his view of the situation. At 1.20 P.M. I heliographed to ascertain whether Colonel Thorneycroft had assumed command, and at the same time asked General Coke to give me his views on the situation on Spion Kop. Still getting no reply, I asked whether General Coke was there, and subsequently received his view of the situation. He stated that, unless the artillery could silence the enemy's guns, the men on the summit could not stand another complete day's shelling, and that the situation was extremely critical.

At 6.30 P.M. I asked if he could keep two battalions on the summit, removing the remainder out of the reach of shells, also whether two battalions would suffice to hold the summit, this was in accordance with a telegram on the subject sent me by the Commander-in-Chief. Later in the evening I made arrangements to send two (Naval) 12-pounders and the Mountain Battery, Royal Artillery, to the summit, together with half-company Royal Engineers (and working parties, two reliefs of 600 men each), to strengthen the entrenchments and provide shell covers for the men. I may here mention that the 17th Company, Royal Engineers, proceeded at the same time as General Woodgate's force, and were employed until daylight upon the entrenchments, then upon road-making and water-supply.

Sandbags were sent up early on the 24th instant.

While Colonel Sim was, with this party, ascending the hill, he met Colonel Thorneycroft descending, having evacuated the position.

I wish to bring to notice that I heard from all but one expression of the admirable conduct and bravery shown by officers and men suffering under a withering artillery fire on the summit of the slopes, and also of those who, with so much endurance, persisted in carrying up water and food and ammunition to the troops during this day.

During the day a staff officer of the Headquarter Staff was present on the summit, and reported direct to the Commander-in-Chief.

At sunset I considered that the position could be held next day, provided that guns could be mounted and effective shelter provided. Both of these conditions were about to be fulfilled, as already mentioned.

In the absence of General Coke, whom I ordered to come to report in person as to the situation, the evacuation took place under orders, given upon his own responsibility, by Lieut.-Colonel Thorneycroft. This occurred in the face of the vigorous protests of General Coke's Brigade-Major, the officer commanding the Middlesex Regiment, and others.

It is a matter for the Commander-in-Chief to decide whether there should be an investigation into the question of the unauthorised evacuation of Spion Kop.

CHARLES WARREN, Lieut.-General.

APPENDIX F.

The following telegrams relating to the publication of Despatches which passed between the War Office and Lord Roberts and General Buller, have been laid before Parliament, in anticipation of the Debate which took place in both Houses.

(1)

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR TO FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ROBERTS

(Telegram.—No. 170.)

War Office, 28th March, 1900.

What do you propose as to publication of Spion Kop despatches? Please see my telegram to Buller,[1] No. 605, of

[1] FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR TO GENERAL SIR REDVERS BULLER.

(Telegram.—No. 605.)

War Office, 5th January 1900.

The only despatches received up to the present time which, in my opinion, could properly be presented, are yours of 2nd December covering Hildyard's of 24th November, and yours of 9th November covering White's of 2nd November. I am not disposed to publish your earlier despatches which contain reviews of the situation and forecasts of your intentions.

But we should have for presentation, as soon as can conveniently be managed, despatches from you covering reports from your Generals as to each of the engagements which have taken place.

5th January, and No. 110,[1] of 6th February; description of a despatch given in the letter has been quoted in Parliament.

We cannot publish all the documents enclosed with your despatch of 13th February. We might, perhaps, publish the following:—

1. Your despatch of 13th February.
2. Buller's report of 30th January.
3. Warren's report, dated Hatting's Farm, 29th January.
4. Buller's letter, dated Spearman's Hill, 30th January, covering Warren's report on Spion Kop.
5. Warren's separate report on Spion Kop.

But I do not feel justified in thus editing the papers unless you concur, and you may perhaps think well to refer to Buller.

I suggest, as an alternative, that we should treat your despatch of 13th February and all its enclosures as confidential, and that Buller should send, through you, a full narrative of the operations. This you could forward to me with any observations you desire to make for publication.

(2)

FROM FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ROBERTS TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR

(Received April 1.)

(Telegram.—No. 360.)

Bloemfontein, 31st March 1900.

With reference to your telegram No. 170, dated March 28, regarding the Spion Kop despatches, I have suggested to Buller that he should prepare a full narrative of the operations in accordance with the instructions conveyed in your telegram No. 110 of Feb. 6.

[1] FROM THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TO FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ROBERTS.
(Telegram.—No. 110.)

War Office, 6th February 1900.

You will, I feel sure, agree with me that Lord Methuen's despatch of the Magersfontein engagement could not be published as sent. There are passages in it inappropriate to such documents; and it also gives information of importance to the enemy. A despatch should be a complete account, and should not contain reports from subordinate commanders or other documents. Paragraphs should be numbered, and all names of officers selected for praise should be in one paragraph, trivial details being omitted. If he would like me to revise the despatch in question, I will do so; but as I should prefer not to undertake this responsibility, I suggest you should ask him to cancel this despatch and write another.

He has replied as follows:—

'I do not at all like the idea of re-writing a despatch for publication. I much prefer to leave it in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief, and let him select for publication whatever he thinks proper.'

I have no objection to publication of the paper with omissions specified by you. It might perhaps be better to overrule Buller's objection and adopt alternative course which you suggest. Wire reply.

(3)

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR TO FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ROBERTS

(Telegram.—No. 174.)

War Office, 2nd April 1900.

Your No. 360. In view of Buller's objection, I abandon proposal that despatch should be re-written. I propose to publish selection described in my telegram, No. 170.

(4)

FROM FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ROBERTS TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR

(Telegram.—No. 400.)

Bloemfontein, 6th April 1900.

Your No. 174. I agree to my despatch of 13th February being published.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

Printed by T. and A. Constable, Printers to Her Majesty
at the Edinburgh University Press

Digitized with financial assistance from
Shri Brihad Bhartiya Samaj
on 31 October, 2019